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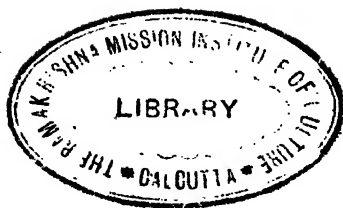








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**FASCISM IN ITALY**

*by*

**BOLTON KING**

*Author of*

**A HISTORY OF ITALIAN UNITY**

*Part Author of*

**ITALY TO-DAY**

**LONDON**

**WILLIAMS & NORGATE LTD**

**1931**

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY  
UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED, LONDON AND WOKING

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## P R E F A C E

Not much is known in England or America of Italian Fascism. The publicity organization of the Italian Government is very thorough. Springes are set for unwary travellers and journalists, and the English Press, which fulminated against the Neapolitan Bourbons eighty years ago, is, with a few exceptions, silent on the almost equally barbarous tyranny of the Fascists. Eminent statesmen go to Italy, take little pains to discover the facts, and give out to the world what has been astutely instilled into them. Ingenious apologies are published in America and England, and books and newspapers teem with inaccuracies which sometimes slide into a suppression of the truth.

Italian politics of recent years are not an inspiring study, but it is well that the facts should be known. This book is an attempt to present them with accuracy.

B. K.

*March 1931*



*College House, Calcutta,*

## FASCISM IN ITALY

### CHAPTER I

#### ITALY AFTER THE GREAT WAR

*The war — Condition after the war — Socialists —  
Christian Democrats*

To understand Fascism we must go back to Italy's entry into the Great War. In 1914 she was on the surface a fairly prosperous democratic state. Industry had developed rapidly. In the North and Centre a network of Cooperative Societies and People's Banks was doing much to relieve the poverty of the workers. The Socialists, who were fast growing in strength and had almost ousted the earlier Anarchists, were on the whole a wisely directed constitutional party. Manhood suffrage had just been granted and there was a good deal of useful social reform. But the political centre was unsound. There were no strong parties in the Chamber with definite principles, only personal or local groups which combined and broke off and combined again in kaleidoscopic variety. Giolitti, who was Premier off and on for many years, regarded the politics of a great country as an exercise in legerdemain, and local favours and bribes of office secured him a shifting and amorphous majority. Despite, however, some Anarchist or Communist outbreaks, he kept the country in good temper, and his tolerance of Trade Unions and a free Press placated the Socialists and

advanced Liberals; but he had no policy, and his ignominious manœuvres repelled the better men from parliamentary life. The whole government, national and local, was in the hands of the bureaucracy and a small section of the wealthier classes.

The Great War burst on this unwholesome, easy-going life. The mass of the people had no wish to fight. Parliament and a majority of the Socialists and Catholics outside were at one in opposing it, and they had most of the middle classes and workers with them. But there were powerful forces making for war. The Army and the Conservatives and a section of the Democrats wanted it. The Nationalist tradition which came down from the Wars of Liberation saw a hope of Italian expansion, and the Allies lavished promises. German frightfulness stirred passion, and the feeling grew that Italy must take its part in the fight for civilization. The war party was reinforced by the revolutionary Syndicalists, led by Mussolini, who added to their fervent nationalism the hope that out of the war would come the social revolution. Mussolini and D'Annunzio—the decadent poet and self-acclaimed superman—helped to fan feeling in the towns of the North and Centre to fever-heat, till it seemed a choice between war and revolt. The Government had already decided to fight, and the reluctant Parliament capitulated to the threat of force. War was declared in May 1915. But the artisans and labourers who were sent to the Front did not know what they were fighting for, they only saw the carnage and privation and the fortunes which were being piled up by the profiteers. The Socialists were still working for peace, the Pope spoke of “the useless carnage” of the war, there was a

defeatist propaganda at the Front, and the badly generalised and discouraged army broke at Caporetto. But when the Austrians burst into Venetia and all North Italy was threatened, the country roused itself in a great patriotic effort, and the army never wavered again. The Austrians were held heroically on the Piave and at last defeated.

The peace found Italy bordering on chaos. There was deep disappointment and indignation that the spoils of victory were so few, that the promised Dalmatia—even Fiume—was, owing to President Wilson's veto, denied them by the Allies. The finances were disordered, trade was dislocated, the railways were in confusion. Everyone, except the profiteers and some of the munition workers, was worse off than before the war, and the profuse promises of better times for the many were forgotten. Some of the demobilized soldiers returned unwilling to resume their more monotonous civil occupations and ready to listen to any loose talk of social change. The prestige of the ruling classes had gone for ever, and the future lay with one or more of the new parties which competed for the succession.

The Socialists were already a powerful party before the war, and their consistent opposition to it on the whole strengthened them. They recruited to some extent from university students and the *intelligenza* of the middle classes, but chiefly from workers in the metal and chemical factories, the railwaymen, the postal and telegraph employees, and the agricultural labourers of the Po Valley, whom they had wrested from the Anarchists. After the war they were reinforced by a section of the disillusioned ex-service men. In the election of 1919 they were able to return over 150 Deputies. They were

in close alliance with the General Federation of Labour, which represented the Trade Unions, soon to be two millions strong, and the rich and powerful league of Cooperative Societies. Most of the leaders were moderate men who accepted the monarchy and wished to work through Parliament. They have been blamed for not accepting office in coalition with the democratic Liberals; had they done so, they might have saved free institutions, but at the moment it seemed too hazardous to link their fortunes with the facing-both-ways men of the old constitutional parties. And their own difficulties checked them. Some of the Trade Unions had been captured by young inexperienced men, disciples of war violence, and the Labour Federation was not always able to enforce its orders. There were sections on the Left of the party which slid by degrees into Communism, and it was not till the beginning of 1921 that the Communists were finally excluded from the Socialist Congress. This uncertainty of aim and poor leadership weakened their effectiveness. While they helped to fight and kill "Bolshevism", they encouraged unwise strikes, which only served to foment the Conservative reaction. They were ready to be the slaves of phrases, and there was something a little unbalanced and trivial in their policy. But with all their mistakes and occasional wildness they were true to Democracy and resolute to work inside the constitution.

There was a good deal in common between the Socialists and the "Christian Democrats". Shortly before the war the Pope had withdrawn the veto which forbade Italian Catholics to take a part in politics, and early in 1919 a large number of priests and Catholic laymen,

with more or less Socialist leanings, started the new "People's Party", led by the Sicilian priest Don Sturzo. They had a stronger middle-class element than the Socialists, and they made rapid headway among the small proprietors and farmers of the Po Valley and the textile workers of Lombardy, and robbed the Socialists of some of their following among the agricultural labourers and metal workers. They had a startling success at the election of a few months later, when they returned ninety-nine Deputies. Their policy was in part a protest against the war spirit, and they defended the League of Nations at a time when it had few friends in Italy. They asked for social legislation and pleaded that local government should be saved from an encroaching bureaucracy. Naturally their bias was in favour of the Church and the Catholic schools, and they were suspicious of the traditional anti-clericalism of the governing classes, but they were anxious not to associate themselves with the Clericalist hierarchy. Some of them were high-minded men with big ideals, but there was no permanent place for a Centre party, hampered by its clerical associations, between the Liberals and the Socialists.

## CHAPTER II

### BEGINNINGS OF FASCISM

*Nationalists — Revolutionary Syndicalists — Mussolini —  
Early Fascism — "Bolshevism" — Economic Revival*

There were now three great constitutional parties: the old "Liberals", a loose body who shaded from Conservatism to Democracy; the Socialists; and the Christian Democrats. The two latter at all events had defined policies; and the problem was whether, divided in aims and mutually suspicious as they were, they could hold their own against the gathering forces of revolution. Fascism was only in the germ, but the "Nationalists", more revolutionary in methods than in sentiment, were preparing the way.<sup>1</sup> They were the Conservatives and Army men and Clericals, who had been defeated by Liberalism at the end of the last century, but who still dreamed of a policy of expansion and a "strong" Government, inside or outside the Constitution, which would dragoon the masses into obedience. They had fed on the war spirit, and were eager to advance the borders of Italy in disregard of other nationalities and the League of Nations, make the Adriatic an Italian sea, and create a colonial empire. The big industrialists and landowners and the profiteers who wished to continue the profitable days of the war gravitated to them. They were a small-minded, reckless group, sometimes ready to coquette with the revolutionaries, provided only that they could

<sup>1</sup> Salvatorelli, *Nazionalfascismo*, 48, 71.

drive the Liberals from office. By themselves they could do little mischief, but fortune threw in their way the new Fascist party, which was just beginning to feel its strength. The first Fascist groups were founded early in 1919. (Their original motives are a little difficult to disentangle, but perhaps uppermost among them was an unreasoning but intense patriotism, fired by resentment that Italy had been "robbed of the fruits of victory") and particularly that the Allies had not allowed her to take Dalmatia. They chafed under the knowledge that the mass of the people hated the war and all that pertained to it, that the Army was disregarded and the demobilized soldiers neglected. But the party drew its early strength as much from its social programme. Mussolini had before the war been one of the leaders of the quasi-Communists of the Syndicalist school; he now encouraged them to revolt, hoping with their help to outbid the Socialists. His programme of 1919 included a Constituent Assembly in which the Fascists would work for a republic, the confiscation of Church property, the minimum wage, the legal right of workers to share in the management of factories, "the handing over of public industries and services to proletarian organizations", and a heavily graduated income-tax which should lead to "a partial appropriation of all wealth".<sup>1</sup> A violent revolution "against the decrepit old state" was to crush the constitutional parties—Liberals, Socialists, Christian Democrats—and build the collectivist community on the wreck of the bourgeoisie. They remembered that Parliament had already in 1915 yielded to the threat of force.

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A. For their republicanism, see *Popolo d'Italia*, March 24, 1919, quoted in Trentin, *L'aventure italienne*, 219.

Their leader, Benito Mussolini, was the son of a Socialist blacksmith in the Forlì country. He was trained as a teacher, but soon abandoned the career, and after imprisonment for his share in a turbulent election, sought work in Switzerland. Expelled thence, it is not clear whether for political or other reasons, he returned to Italy and edited the newspaper of the extreme Socialists. We have seen how with his following of revolutionary Syndicalists he swelled the cry for war and how after the war he founded the equally revolutionary Fascists. He is a coarse-fibred man, passionate and brutal at times, with a veneer of culture and, when it pleases him, of charm. (His consuming ambition and forceful mind, which knows its end—at least the end uppermost at the moment, —and drives remorselessly towards it, was bound to bring him to the front in a country where parties and their leaders took the easy road and shuffled off difficulties. He has a rare ability to seize the moment and profit by circumstances. His personal magnetism and his imaginative and sentimental rhetoric sway his followers, especially the unthinking youths who form the active section of them. But while he has the gifts of a demagogue, he has only the minor arts of a statesman. His ill-furnished and tumultuous mind has made him, at short intervals, secularist and professing Catholic, republican and royalist, pacifist<sup>1</sup> and enthusiast for war, revolutionary syndicalist and patron of the well-to-do. He is, writes one of his party who was in close touch with him, “by turns cynical and sentimental, impulsive and cautious, generous and cruel, uncompromising and conciliatory”. He will

<sup>1</sup> *L'Avanti*, September 9, 1914, quoted in Chiesa, *La Situation en Italie*, 35-37.

betray a friend without a scruple, and never expresses regret or remorse for his rapid changes of front. His contradictions may be part of a double game or they may be the workings of an irregular mind which leaps from reason to violence and back again. One would gladly accept the latter hypothesis, and it may be the true explanation; but it is sometimes difficult to reject the charge of duplicity, and this at all events is the charge of men who have been his intimate associates. It is not for nothing that he lauds Machiavelli. It has been claimed for him that he is a strong man. But in spite of force and ruthlessness, real strength he does not possess. Though he has boasted that he never took the advice of a friend, he is sensitive to pressure and he has never hazarded success for the sake of a principle. A man of moderately strong will can dominate a people, who from the King downwards possess little civic courage, and in the Italy of to-day a man may win to the top who in England or Germany would find his level lower down.

In the many-coloured warp of his political life there are few continuous threads. His perfervid nationalism, with its hazy inspiration from Imperial Rome, makes him dream of a Greater Italy, whose chance may come to snatch more territory. He probably still hopes some day to annex Dalmatia and Albania; he hopes for a colonial empire. But he is a bad European. He recognizes no rights of the non-Italian subjects of Italy, unless they surrender their traditions and language. He hates "sickly internationalism" and has been bitter against "words of peace, of humanity, of brotherhood between the nations"; he accepts the League of Nations only so long and so far as he is obliged. And his Italy is not to be a community

of free men, not to go on the road which the majority would choose, but must be subject, body and soul, to the all-controlling state. The individual counts for nothing; there is no room for the diverse tendencies and aspirations of a democratic community. The Government, which in the last resort means himself, is to rule every thought and word and action, and those who will not accept his autocracy must forfeit their rights as citizens. (The possibility that he may himself err seems foreign to him, and his Autobiography is a sorry parade of his conceit and self-complacency.) And the dead uniformity which he aims at must be achieved by force. He shares the Communist faith that it is for a minority to impose a social revolution on an unwilling country. He would like willing obedience, but till it comes—and he knows it has not come yet—he trusts to force only. (“Violence”, he says, “to me is perfectly moral, more moral than compromise or arrangement.”)

For some months Fascism made no headway; apart from other causes its pre-war record alienated the masses. In the election of 1919 it did not gain a single seat, and in the Province of Milan Mussolini polled 5,000 votes out of a total of nearly 350,000. His faith in the mass of his fellow-countrymen, never very strong, fell to its minimum, and in April 1920 he wrote in his paper, “Down with the bourgeois state and the Socialist state, henceforward I have only the absurd but always consolatory religion of Anarchy.”<sup>1</sup> For the moment the revolutionary role passed to the rival extremists, the Communists, who took their orders from Moscow. Though trade was on the up-grade, though the railways

<sup>1</sup> *Popolo d'Italia*, quoted in Trentin, *L'aventure italienne*, 327.

were recovering, and much activity was spent on public works and housing, there was wide distress and it is said that 400,000 were out of work. There had not yet been time to recover from the war. Prices soared as the paper currency increased and the *lira* depreciated. Taxes were very heavy, the result of an heroic effort which reduced the deficit on the Budget in two years from 23 to less than 8 milliards *lire*. For a year Nitti, the economist, who was now Premier, made a serious attempt to cure the troubles. He was not a strong man and his difficulties were very great. He had no party or personal following in the Chamber, and he could not trust the Army. But to some extent he succeeded where a more forceful man would have failed. He set his face against repression, alike from policy and a real sympathy with the workers, and thus prepared the way for the defeat of Bolshevism. He allowed—a novelty in Italy—free elections without governmental pressure, and this riveted the attachment to the constitution of Socialists and People's Party.

But in September 1919 D'Annunzio made a spectacular seizure of Fiume with the sympathy and help of part of the Army and in defiance of the Government. His action struck at law and order as much as did the Curragh movement of 1914 in Ireland, and the workers were not slow to take the lesson to heart. If the officers could defy the law, why should not they? There followed an orgy of strikes, though not so general as in contemporary England; there was a strike against Summer Time, strikes when troops were moved by rail; provision stores were seized and the food sold at forced prices; the Town Council of Bologna organized a semi-independent Communist republic. The strikes spread to the railwaymen

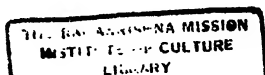
and Post Office employees, and the Government hardly tried to check them. In Sicily and the Campagna the peasants, interpreting for themselves a resolution of the Chamber, seized land; in the Po Valley the agricultural labourers dictated the rate of wages. A movement of more serious significance followed. In August 1920 the workers took forcible possession of a factory at Milan, in order to prevent a lock-out from taking effect, and when the employers retaliated by threatening a general lock-out, they seized some 600 mills and factories, mostly in Northern Italy. The affair has been exaggerated. There was not much violence, the men kept discipline, and in a fashion the work went on. The Trade Union and Socialist leaders and the Christian Democrats attempted, not very resolutely, to check developments; and Giolitti, who had returned to power, with masterly judgment—and also, perhaps, because he could not trust the police—left the impossible movement to run its brief course and die. The workers found themselves helpless to run the mills, and after a few days abandoned them. Fascism had no part in the Bolshevist collapse; it was as yet not strong enough to make itself felt effectively, and Mussolini indeed had smiled approvingly on the occupation of the factories.<sup>1</sup> There is no substance in the myth that it saved Italy from Bolshevism. But the myth is a convenient one and it still lives in dark corners.

The Communist movement hardly checked the

<sup>1</sup> Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship*, 39-42; Mowrer, *Immortal Italy*, 327; *Tre pregiudizi* (Milan, 1925), 22-23, 27-28; Nitti, *Bolschevisme, Fascisme, et Démocratie*, 67; Nenni, *La lutte des classes en Italie*, 183. See the admissions in *Survey of Fascism*, 40, and Villari, *Awakening of Italy*, 145, 149.

revival of trade; the motor-car factories, where the strikes had been especially serious, increased their exports for the first time to an appreciable extent. The experts were agreed that the post-war economic crisis had been surmounted, and the Budget approached equilibrium.<sup>1</sup> Deflation had been checked and prices were steadier. Savings Bank deposits increased in the year by 37 per cent. The Trade Unions were more cautious, and their numbers went up to two millions. A threat of bombardment had sharply stopped the crazy carnival of Fiume and D'Annunzio's histrionic defiance of Europe. Giolitti pursued his policy of masterly inactivity, and in spite of Conservative pressure refused to be stampeded into violence. He knew that he could not prosecute workers by the thousand, and violence on the part of the Government would lead to counter-violence, which might slip into civil war. His coolness helped the country to survive the shocks of war and post-war troubles with the constitutional structure shaken but intact. In July 1921 Mussolini declared that the Bolshevist peril no longer existed.

<sup>1</sup> Mortara, *Prospettive economiche*, and other authorities quoted in Salvemini, 140-142; Bachi, *Italia economica*, 1920, 22; Bonomi, *Dal Socialismo al Fascismo*, 94-96.



## CHAPTER III

### THE TERROR

*Elements of Fascism—Giolitti's Policy—Organization of Fascism—Terrorism—Fascism aims at Power—The March to Rome—Was Fascism necessary?*

But the disorders had spread panic among the richer and middle classes, and they hoped to profit from the reaction to crush Socialism once and for all. An ill-cemented crowd—industrialists, landowners, tenant farmers, Army officers, republicans and syndicalists, shopkeepers, school-boys, and criminals, above all the half-starved educated bourgeoisie—the doctors, lawyers, teachers—joined in a vague crusade, some from real fear of anarchy or sincere desire to clean the high places of the state, some from revolutionary aims hardly distinguishable from those of Communism, many from mere excitement, still more from a bitter desire to punish the workers and trample them into docility. The Fascists supplied the organization, but the impulsion came from reactionaries who hoped to smother Liberals and Socialists and Christian Democrats in a common catastrophe, and make the wealthier classes and the Army masters of the state. It was they who supplied the money to finance the movement.

Had Italy possessed a statesman, most of them would have rallied in time to the Government. But Giolitti harked back to his small policy of manœuvre, and plotted to play off Socialists and Fascists against one another. He hoped that the Fascists would crush the Socialists

and then come meekly into the *Liberal fold*. In order to intimidate the Socialists, he connived at the outrages of the Fascists, and allowed the officers to equip and train them. Although here and there soldiers and police checked the Fascist fury, it was not on the orders of the Government. It was the last and worst of Giolitti's disservices to Italy. But at the election of 1921 the Socialists and Christian Democrats, in spite of intimidation, returned to the Chamber nearly as strong as before, the Fascists carrying only 35 seats, and the angry Socialists secured Giolitti's downfall. His place was taken by Bonomi, a well-meaning but weak man, who took office with a coalition of Liberals and Christian Democrats. But there was too much suspicion between the two wings, and in February 1922 Bonomi in his turn resigned. A period of uncertainty and intrigue succeeded, till—thanks largely to the King's maladroitness—the Premiership went to Facta, the most insignificant of Giolitti's lieutenants. Under him the Government effaced itself.

If Socialists and Christian Democrats and Liberals had worked together, as they might have done for a time under an honest and able Premier, the state would have stood four-square against revolution. But this was impossible under Giolitti and Facta, and the impotence of Government left a clear field for the vengeance of the reactionaries. They found their instrument in Fascism, which had suddenly leaped from its weak beginnings to powerful being. The Nationalists of the Extreme Right cared little that they were fomenting rebellion; they had encouraged the seizure of Fiume; the gilded youth had rioted at Rome, cudgelled Deputies, and sacked newspaper offices; Conservatives and Fascists had combined

at Milan to wreck the offices of a Socialist paper. The alliance extended rapidly to other parts of the country. It was made easier by the Communists, who now that they were disowned by the Socialists were going their own wild way and rivalling the Fascists in disorder and outrage. Bloodshed at Bologna, where a Conservative town councillor was murdered, brought matters to a head; it is not easy to distribute the blame for the riot, but it is probable that though the provocation came from the Fascists,<sup>1</sup> the Communists were the more guilty, though not they but the Anarchists were responsible for a bomb outrage, which killed twenty persons in a Milan theatre in the following March. Fascism hastened to avenge the possessing classes. The bourgeoisie poured into its ranks; the industrialists and landowners put their Press at its disposal and contributed to its funds, a fixed levy in proportion to capital being levied on all proprietors whether willing to pay or not. Well financed and equipped from Army stores, it organized bands to terrorize the workers. "Punitive expeditions" were sent against offending towns and villages, and though the police sometimes tried to keep order and fired on the raiders, more often they looked on approvingly. Between January and May 1921 the Fascists killed 200 and wounded over 1,100. During the two years of the Terror they are estimated to have killed 600. Of course there were reprisals, always severely punished, and a smaller number of Fascists, probably not exceeding 300, were killed by the Communists or the maddened artisans and peasants, and others were shot by the police. It is possible that if the casualties among the police and general public

<sup>1</sup> Mowrer, 350; Salvemini, 98.

are included, the number of dead reached 2,000.<sup>1</sup> But murder was not the only object of the Fascist expeditions. They set themselves deliberately to crush working-class organization by destroying the buildings of the Chambers of Labour, of the Cooperative Stores which the Christian Democrats and Socialists had organized with splendid success throughout the North, of libraries and working-men's clubs. The shopkeepers were angry that the Cooperatives kept down prices; the landowners wished to break the bargains with their labourers, and despite, it seems, the protests of an honest section they paid the Fascists to crush their victims. Soldiers and police assisted or looked on, and while the courts savagely punished the workers who struck back, hardly a Fascist was convicted for murder or arson. The terrorism extended to the election of April 1921. Fascists and police drove the Socialists from the booths or destroyed their voting papers or marched them to the poll and forced them to vote for the reactionary candidates.

But Italy was not yet cowed and the Terror produced its natural reaction. The employers began to fear their Frankenstein, especially as the Fascists were still an avowed revolutionary party, with a programme which on paper outbid the Socialists. The Socialists themselves had purged their ranks of extremists, and a visit of some of their leaders to Russia had destroyed any lingering desire to copy the Soviet. Mussolini, either because he realized the democratic strength or reverted to his own earlier social aspirations, preached tolerance and tried

<sup>1</sup> Mowrer, 364; Salvemini, 36, 37, 103-105; Nenni, 198-199. The figures were absurdly exaggerated in the *Daily Mail* and other English papers.

under the auspices of the Government to bring about a treaty of friendship with Socialists and Christian Democrats. But he had sold himself to the reactionaries, and the Fascist lodges and Nationalist press, in spite of his threat to resign, refused to accept the treaty. Power with him always took precedence of principle and he abruptly broke off the negotiations. He allied himself with the Conservatives and substituted a meagre programme of social reform for the syndicalism of early Fascism. Not long before he had vaunted his republicanism, but finding that the Army would have none of it and eager to get it behind him, he threw over his republican followers and professed a grudging acceptance of the monarchy. "Our programme", he announced, "is simply that we mean to govern Italy."

Perhaps at the moment he wished to check the outrages, but, whether or not, some of the Fascist bands were out of hand, and the sorry tale of murder and rapine went on. Operations were now on a bigger scale. Three thousand Fascists and police invaded Ravenna on the centenary of Dante's death and after provocation from a few Communists looted part of the town. The Fascists were now operating independently of the Government, and Facta, after extracting a promise that they would respect the capital, left them a free hand in the rest of Italy. Their ambitions grew fast, but it is not very clear why in the autumn of 1922 they decided rather suddenly to make a bid for government. They had been feeling their strength in local mobilizations; they had paralysed the Socialist organization among the farm-labourers of the North by enticing them into syndicates which were ultra-revolutionary in theory but in practice were

dominated by the employers; the Socialists were divided, the Christian Democrats were paralysed by the Vatican; the Fascists knew how little they had to fear from the Government and they hoped, though with some anxiety, for the complicity of the Army. Several generals and the King's cousin, the Duke of Aosta, had promised their support. But the main motives of the new programme probably lay in the overweening self-confidence of the younger Fascists and in the pressure of officers and Nationalists, who hoped by Fascist aid to overthrow the Liberal Government and come into power themselves. This, however, is more or less conjectural, and the causes which precipitated the "March to Rome" are still obscure. An abortive general strike to protest against Government connivance with the Fascists gave them their excuse, and preparations went on apace. Barracks and munition depots were raided; cries were raised "To Rome!" and the Fascist bands were mobilized throughout the country. In the North the Government buildings and railway stations were seized, and the Duke of Aosta went to Perugia to be in touch. On the morning of October 28th some 10,000 to 20,000<sup>1</sup> Fascists, armed with revolvers or sticks, arrived by rail or road at Rome. Facta had at last roused himself and wished to declare martial law. If the King signed the decree, the Army would almost certainly have followed him, with the exception of the rebel officers, and the rising would be pinched out with little difficulty, for after all the Fascists were still a rather small minority. But Victor Emanuel III, weakest of men,

<sup>1</sup> The estimates vary widely and some are absurd. Perhaps there were not more than 10,000. The numbers increased greatly in the next three days.

hesitated. He was frightened by the Fascists; perhaps family influences were at work; he probably hoped that if Mussolini could be brought within the bounds of the constitution, he would be tied to legal action. He refused to sign, and as soon as this was known a mass of wavering Fascists poured in. By the night of October 31st there were probably over 50,000 in Rome. The King, caught in his own meshes, tried in vain to find another Prime Minister, and on October 29th he had tamely handed the seals of office to Mussolini.

(Fascism had triumphed, and the startled country found that the King had given it into the hands of a faction) Was there anything to justify the revolution and the accompanying Terror? (Could it be pleaded that the democratic government of Italy was so rotten that it had to be excised at any cost, and that the Fascists, a small minority of the nation, must in the interests of the country snatch and hold their power by ruthless force?) Were the constitutional parties too feeble and demoralized? Had politics been too debauched by Giolitti? Was the Constitution of Italy outworn? Much cleansing was indeed needed in high quarters; in certain directions there was pitiful irresolution and civic cowardice and exaggerated party feeling. (But the political position was not so hopeless as to call for a remedy worse than the disease. The post-war troubles were not seriously worse than in other countries,) if allowance is made for the Italian tradition of faction fights and the endemic readiness to shoot or stab. Much good and careful work had been done to repair the financial and economic damage of the war, and the country was rapidly recovering. All the parliamentary parties had men who were unheroic, but honest

and capable and reasonable, and the need of union was being slowly understood. The Trade Unions and wiser Socialists were disciplining the labour movement and bringing it on to practical and sane lines. There was indeed still a good deal of disorder, for much of which the Fascists themselves were responsible, but there was no anarchy, and the natural evolution of a democratic state would have cured its own sickness. The revolution was in fact less an attempt to heal the state than the revolt of a class, and the great mass of the Fascists were moved by the selfish class-consciousness of the Italian middle classes. Employers who hoped to stamp out the labour movement, landowners who wished to bring back the days of semi-serfdom, profiteers who wanted to quash the inquiry into war profits which the Government had instituted, shopkeepers who resented the competition of the Cooperative Stores, burghers who had lost their traditional control of the local councils, above all their sons demoralized by the war and seeking a life of excitement which did not mean hard work—all united in a crusade to keep Italy for a fief of the bourgeoisie.

## CHAPTER IV

### FASCISM IN POWER

#### *The Attack on Labour—Election of 1924—Murder of Matteotti—Revival of Terrorism*

For the moment Mussolini, whether from conviction or necessity, hesitated between law and violence and seemed inclined to govern constitutionally. He offered posts in the Cabinet to the leaders of the democratic parties, and asked for a vote of confidence from the Chamber. He stated at a later date that he was anxious to demobilize the Fascist militia. The Christian Democrats, increasingly harassed by the Vatican, made a short-lived coalition with him, and only the Socialists voted against a resolution of the timid and divided Chamber to give plenary powers to the Government. Mussolini now, with King and Chamber behind him, however half-heartedly, felt safe, and his impatience broke through his uneasy efforts for peace. "All Governments", he said, "in a state of transition must govern illegally in order to overcome their opponents. I want to govern with the full consent of the people, but till this consent declares itself, I keep the maximum of force at my disposal. Perhaps it may happen that force may make consent come, and in any case there is force if consent fails." His first care was to have at his call a sufficient armed strength to overawe the country and perhaps also the dissident elements in his own party. The King's surrender had given him the Army, and it was raised from 175,000 men to its pre-war strength of

275,000. But the Army could not be trusted for a campaign of violence, and he organized 190,000 Fascists into a militia. For nearly two years he refused to allow them to take the oath to the King, and they were sworn to "fidelity to Benito Mussolini who rules the destiny of Italy". They were armed with revolvers (later with rifles), while all non-fascists were forbidden to carry arms. The irregular bands, which had done the worst mischief, were nominally broken up, but some survived for five years more. The Royal Guards, a special police force which had some regard for order, were disbanded, not without bloodshed. The Terror, hitherto sporadic, was now systematized. Between November 1922 and October 1923 there were over 2,000 cases of murders, woundings, beatings or minor assaults on non-fascists, lootings of private houses, arson of newspaper offices. In the month of May 1923 alone, 11 were murdered, over 70 wounded, and 22 Chambers of Labour or working-men's clubs or Cooperative Stores were burned or looted.<sup>1</sup> The victims, of course, struck back where possible, and there were some horrible atrocities for which, it seems, the Communists more than the Socialists were responsible; but they were under great provocation, and at all events their crimes were few compared with those of the Fascist ruffians. It is probable that in this period 150 Fascists and twice as many anti-fascists lost their lives. In revenge for the murder of a Fascist at Turin, 22 workers were dragged from their houses and butchered; the ringleader was promoted to high office. A common practice was to drench their minor victims with castor-oil till the disgust of Europe forced the Government to stop it. 13400

<sup>1</sup> Salvemini, 174-175; Matteotti, *The Fascisti Exposed*, 84-102.

The Terror now struck at some of the leaders of Italian thought. Nitti, ex-Premier and economist of renown, who had incurred Mussolini's special animosity, had his house looted. Amendola, an ex-Minister, was cudgelled so severely that he died from the effects. Count Salvadori, Lecturer at the University of Rome, was beaten for contributing anti-fascist articles to the English press, and had to fly the country. A little later the home of the great thinker, Benedetto Croce, was sacked, and Salvemini, one of the foremost of European historians, was imprisoned on the charge of contributing to an anti-fascist journal, and when he escaped to France was deprived of his nationality. Fascism has little place for culture.

Apart from these attacks on literary men and politicians, the outrages were the incidents of a class warfare. Mussolini brusquely jettisoned the social aspirations of the early Fascists, and the movement was directed more than ever to crush labour. On the one hand the wealthy classes claimed and had their pay. The inquiry into war profiteering was summarily stopped. Death-duties on next-of-kin were repealed; with them went half the tax on directors of Limited Companies; it was made easy for owners of securities to evade income-tax; most of the telegraphs and telephones, and the tobacco, salt, and match monopolies were handed over to private companies, though the Government shares in the profits.<sup>1</sup> Unsavoury concessions were made to private firms, and Fascists of high rank were appointed to their directorships. The Ansaldo engineering firm and the Bank of Rome were bolstered up by state subsidies.<sup>2</sup> It is no wonder

<sup>1</sup> British Department of Overseas Trade, Italy, 1930, 13.

<sup>2</sup> Matteotti, 19-2.

that the relations between Mussolini and the employers' federation were described as "more than cordial". On the other hand there was an average fall in wages of 10 to 13 per cent. below the level of 1921. Income-tax was reimposed on all but the poorest workers under the state and public bodies, and new taxes were laid on small farmers. While first-class fares on railways remained unchanged, third-class fares were raised 15 per cent. An eight-hour day was promised, but actually a normal addition of two hours was sanctioned, and the extra pay for overtime was cut down by more than half. A Government decree, unsanctioned by Parliament, put all Trade Unions under the control of the Prefects, and, for good or bad, strikes nearly disappeared. Workers were beaten or wounded and discharged from their work for observing May Day. Such of the Cooperative Stores of the Christian Democrats as had escaped were systematically destroyed, and 37 priests, it is said, in one province were beaten for defending them. Another priest was murdered. At Molinella, a large agricultural village near Bologna, the Socialists had built up a fine cooperative organization, which farmed much land and built houses. The Fascists seized its property and sold crops and cattle at forced-sale prices to the local shopkeepers and landowners. The charitable institutions of the village were closed, men and women were bludgeoned and one at least murdered, 140 were imprisoned, and finally all non-fascist workers were discharged.<sup>1</sup>

As the hope failed that the Fascists would restore order, the country grew more and more uneasy. The Christian Democrats left the Cabinet in protest against the destruc-

<sup>1</sup> Matteotti, 103-119.

tion of the Catholic stores. The opposition newspapers, which included all journals of good standing, increased their circulation to proportions unknown before. The intellectuals, the Bar, the ex-service men's association, the Confederation of Labour drew up their protests. The Chamber was half prepared to trust Mussolini, half frightened, but he could not count on it. He was still anxious to preserve a show of constitutionalism, and for this he wanted a Chamber which would be meekly subservient. He forced the old Chamber to adopt a new electoral law and then dissolved it. Proportional Representation, for which he had once been an enthusiast, disappeared, and its place was taken by a system which was intended to secure a safe majority for the Fascists. The party which had a majority of votes in the whole country (provided that it polled 25 per cent. of the voting lists) was to elect two-thirds of the Deputies, the remaining third being distributed among the other parties. As the election neared (March 1924), the intimidation and frauds of the election of three years before reappeared in an intensified form. The opposition parties were allowed no electioneering literature, no public meetings; even private meetings were sometimes broken up. The Fascist press boasted that even if the voting went against the party, it would remain in power, and Mussolini declared that in that event he "would make the 200,000 guns of the militia all vote together". But in spite of intimidation and fraudulent voting,<sup>1</sup> the opposition parties polled three million votes against the 4½ millions given for the Fascists; in the more educated North they had a majority. Among the 375 Fascist Deputies about a

<sup>1</sup> Nitti, 72-73.

hundred were Liberals who vainly hoped to retain some independence.

Mussolini had failed to obtain the plebiscite for which he asked and he was faced in the Chamber by a strong minority. Matteotti, one of the few really courageous Deputies, had published in the spring a damning indictment of Fascist rule, and now denounced in the Chamber the outrages and frauds which had accompanied the election. As he knew, he had signed his own death-warrant, and a few days later he was kidnapped in the streets of Rome, taken into the country, and murdered. His death shook the nation out of its frightened acquiescence. The crowds who knelt in prayer on the spot where he had been kidnapped were a symptom of the intense indignation at "free crime in an unfree state". The anti-fascist press rushed up its circulation yet more, the ex-service men called for a cessation of lawlessness. The disaffection grew loud and dangerous and many Fascists deserted what seemed to be a sinking cause. The belief was general that Mussolini had instigated the crime, and how serious he felt the charge to be is shown by his appeal to two of his lieutenants to make themselves his scapegoats. The evidence of complicity is as follows. After the election he wrote an article in his own newspaper threatening Matteotti with "some more concrete reply" than abuse.<sup>1</sup> Marinelli, Treasurer of the Fascist Central Executive, one of the men who directly prompted the murderers, stated that Mussolini gave the order to have Matteotti "put out of the way", and Rossi, the chief of Mussolini's Press Bureau, made a similar charge.

<sup>1</sup> Facsimile of his MS. in Salvemini, 320; see pp. 319-20, 326, 330-332, 352 et alibi.

Both these men were in very close touch with Mussolini, and according to his statement a few months earlier came to him every morning to report. When legal proceedings started, care was taken to amnesty Rossi and Marinelli and thus cut the link between Mussolini and the murderers. But strong as is the evidence of Mussolini's guilt, it does not amount to proof, and on the whole the charitable probability is that he used expressions to his henchmen which they understood as a desire that the murder should be done, that they arranged it in the belief that it would please him, but that he gave no actual order and was perhaps surprised that his violent talk had been taken at its face value.

With a little more courage the whole Fascist structure would probably have collapsed. But the King, weak as ever, refused to act, and the opposition Deputies, instead of rousing the Chamber and country, withdrew from the tainted Parliament and formed a sort of rival Chamber, thus dooming themselves to impotence. Mussolini had quailed at the first outcry; he expressed his horror at the deed, and showed his fears by a thin pretext that the kidnapping was a practical joke and the murder an accident. He pledged himself to discover and punish the culprits; he promised to issue no more decrees without parliamentary sanction, and to absorb the militia into the regular armed forces. But after a few weeks of retreat he was quick to grasp at the chance of recovery which the Opposition and the King offered him. The King broke his coronation oath<sup>1</sup>—not for the last time—by signing a decree which empowered the Prefects to

<sup>1</sup> Which pledged him to maintain Charles Albert's Statute, which among other things guaranteed freedom of the Press.

confiscate newspapers at their discretion; magistrates and teachers were placed in complete subjection to the Government; the headquarters of the Labour Federation were occupied by the police. The tardy trial of Matteotti's murderers nearly two years later was removed to a small provincial town. The principal agents had already been released under the amnesty, the judge was a man of bad reputation, and the trial was a travesty of justice.<sup>1</sup> Three of the murderers were condemned to six years' penal servitude, and under the amnesty they too were released two months later.

In two or three months, although three Ministers resigned as a protest against the terrorism, Mussolini felt himself safe. In January 1925 he boldly announced his personal responsibility for Fascist action—outrages and all. A very severe Press Law finally crushed the anti-fascist papers. Free local government was abolished in all the smaller towns and they were placed under Government officials. No Bill was to be submitted to the Chamber without the consent of Mussolini as President of the Council. The command of the Army and Navy was transferred from the King to him, and though the militia now took the oath to the King they could take orders from the *Duce* alone. And the murders and outrages continued through the country. For a few days there was a reign of terror at Florence;<sup>2</sup> after an attempt on Mussolini's life in November 1925 the Fascists wrecked the houses of hundreds of Liberals and Socialists; newspaper offices were systematically sacked; juries were terrorized or purged of non-fascists. Often the police were careful not to track Fascists who

<sup>1</sup> Salvemini, 372-375.

<sup>2</sup> Salvemini, 175-185.

were accused of murder or rapine. An amnesty had covered all "offences for national ends", and even reduced sentences for political murders; the wording was designed to release Fascists, while their opponents remained in prison. Mussolini superintended the Terror, partly from his natural leaning to violence, partly because he dared not ruffle his disorderly following. He ordered the sacking of the Catholic clubs, and when the Pope protested, justified it on the ground that they were anti-fascist. He condemned indeed unauthorized reprisals, but in the same breath eulogized "governmental violence", and the magistrates took the hint to acquit Fascist ruffians. He telegraphed to a Prefect to make life difficult for a young professor who was "a stupid opponent of the Government and of Fascism", and an article written by him threatened death to a man who had deserted the Fascist ranks.<sup>1</sup> A high official, hinting that he acted at his command, ordered a Prefect to quash all proceedings against Fascists who bludgeoned their opponents. Italy lay stunned and breathless. Men did not know from day to day whether they would return home beaten or wounded or to find their houses looted. No free life, no expression of opinion, was permitted. And resistance was impossible. The 100,000 police and the 300,000 revolvers of the militia awed the nation into silence, and after the King's defection there was no hope from the Army. The Fascists had conquered Italy.

<sup>1</sup> Facsimiles in Salvemini, 291, 294, 296. The last case was, however, rather earlier, in March 1924. See Appendix B.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FASCIST CONSTITUTION

*The Theory of Fascism—Fascism and the Individual—  
The Nation-State—The Autocracy—The Electoral  
System—The Grand Council*

Fascism started with few principles behind it. (Its programme was in the main revolutionary and negative, and had little space for constructive thought.) But the few thinkers in the party came to feel the need of a theory which would justify their action, and they elaborated a kind of philosophy<sup>1</sup> which is less interesting in its argument than in its conclusions. Fascist writers sometimes claim to base their doctrines on Imperial Rome and the Middle Ages, and ban all modern thought from the Renaissance onwards.<sup>2</sup> This is true in so far that their tenets appropriate the paramount authority of medieval State and Church. But in fact they seem to derive their political thought from Hobbes and Hegel and Comte, with an occasional travesty of Mazzini, and their economic thought from Sorel; the strange mixture is perhaps partly responsible for the loose thinking that characterizes all their writing. They proceed on a series of assumptions, which they hardly attempt to prove. Their first postulate

<sup>1</sup> Rocco, *La dottrina del fascismo*; Volpe and Olivetti in *Survey of Fascism* (1929); Ferrari, *Le régime fasciste italien*; Trentin, *Les transformations récentes du droit public italien*; Sturzo, *Italy and Fascism*.

<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding, Fascist literature has more to say of Machiavelli than Dante.

denies that the conception of humanity is based on any social fact. To them the only real entities are nations, each independent and isolated, without obligations to other peoples or duties to the race. The normal relationship of nations is that of actual or potential war, for war is "an eternal law of the human race". "Without national hatred there can be no virtue", said the Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies. Hence the dominant militarism, the periodic rattling of the sabre, the contempt for the League of Nations. There is a perverted national pride, which appeals to the average ill-educated Fascist and makes the young men of the militia fancy themselves in all seriousness the heirs of ancient Rome. There are eloquent enthusiasts who believe that only Fascism and "the Latin idea of the Catholic Church" can save European and American civilization.<sup>1</sup> Kept by a tied Press in ignorance of most that passes outside their borders, they regard themselves as crusaders to win two continents for autocracy and Catholicism.

As a natural consequence, they deny the rights of the individual. Their dogma holds that the individual exists solely for the society of which he forms a part, and that the state obliterates all individual rights. "Society", says a Fascist apologist, "is not the sum of the individuals who constitute the nation, and the individual is not the end of society, but only the means; the fundamental problem for Fascism is not that of the rights of individuals or classes, but of the right of the state and the duty of individuals." "The Fascist state", in Mussolini's words, "interprets the duties which the citizens have to fulfil." Only the Government (and the Government, be it

<sup>1</sup> *Antieuropa*, July 1929 and January 1930.

remembered, can be drawn from one party only) can decide what is "right" and what are the national ideals; individuals are but subjects and have no voice in the making of laws. The state should seek the welfare of the masses, but their welfare is a concession, not a right. They may not acquire it of their own volition, they may not determine its form. There is a fragment of truth in the Fascist doctrine, but it has been corrupted into a denial of all free life. Fascist writers sometimes speak of the value of personality, but their system alike in theory and practice makes for the enfeeblement of will. It can never create a virile people.

The doctrine acquires force from the Fascist identification of the nation with the state and the further identification of the state with the Government in power. "The existing Government", lays down Signor Gentile, "is in itself force, law, morals", and the nation includes that part only of the people which accepts the Government. Fascist logic runs on these lines: the nation is one and its interests are one, there cannot therefore be two parties with divergent interests within one nation; but parties do in fact exist, and therefore one party only can be regarded as the nation and all other parties are "anti-national". "The Fascist party", said a Deputy in the Chamber, "will be no longer a party in conflict with other parties in a struggle for power, but a party which monopolizes politics by virtue of its own proper right to defend the fundamental institutions of the state." All who are not Fascists, that is at the present moment probably the majority of the people, are as aliens. They have few personal rights; they are practically debarred from the franchise, they cannot sit in Parliament. They

may not exercise a profession; if workers, they have no rights as against their employers. Under the Law of Public Safety anyone who expresses ideas contrary to those of the Government is liable to lose all personal liberty.

There is one final deduction. Even inside the one nation-party there are differences of opinion, and in practice among the Fascists these have sometimes been acute. Therefore in the last resort the policy of the party, and with it the rights of individuals and classes, the official morality of the nation, the personal liberty and property of every Italian, hang on the will of one man. Fascism is eloquent on the man of genius, who is to interpret the needs of the nation and decide its destinies, and they believe (in many cases with secret reservations) that they have found this "providential" man in Mussolini. No ruler has ever been more absolutely a dictator. The King is by law obliged to keep him in power so long as the present political and economic system lasts.<sup>1</sup> His Cabinet is composed of officials who have no collective responsibility and who are only his executive officers. No measure can come before Senate or Chamber or Grand Council except with his consent, and if any measure brought forward by himself is rejected, it can come up again after three months and then must be voted on by ballot without discussion.<sup>2</sup> He can make laws on his own responsibility, if there are "exceptional circumstances which imply an absolute or urgent necessity". He can declare a state of siege without reference to King or Chamber. He can override the law in any question which concerns "public institu-

<sup>1</sup> Law of December 24, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix G.

tions and institutions of public utility", and this only needs a liberal interpretation to make him master of the whole economic and social framework of the country.<sup>1</sup> The "Court of Accounts", which exercises a sort of audit of the state finances, has been made directly dependent on him, and he can prevent it from criticizing the Government's expenditure. Administrative Orders (*decreti-leggi*), which are subject only to the posthumous and perfunctory approval of the Chamber, have altered the legal status of commercial companies, have submitted non-political movements to the control of Government, and have abolished free local government in the larger towns.<sup>2</sup> "Owing to the fact", boasts an apologist, "that the courts recognize *decreti-leggi* and because Parliament always ratifies them, there is no limit to the legislative powers of the Government", that is, its Chief. He is head of the military and naval forces of the country; the militia swears fidelity to him and is under his uncontrolled command. All official posts are occupied by Fascists, and as such they are bound to obey him. There is no independent Bench; judges and magistrates must take their orders from him, and if suspected of views contrary to those of the Government can be dismissed. Every Fascist swears "to obey the orders of the *Duce* without discussing them".<sup>3</sup> Criticism even of his personal appearance is punishable by imprisonment.

Nor is there any constitutional organ to check the autocracy. The King has still the nominal right to refuse his consent to a law and to dissolve the Chamber, but he knows that he must obey the Fascists or abdicate.

<sup>1</sup> Trentin, *Transformations*, 266-273.

<sup>2</sup> Ferrari, 114-115.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

The Senate can debate no subject which the chief vetoes, must adopt what rules of procedure it pleases him to make, and has lost its right to judge in cases of High Treason or impeach Ministers except by consent of the Fascist Grand Council. The Chamber, under the Law of May 1928, is appointed on the basis of the "Corporative" organization of industry<sup>1</sup> and in such a way that only Fascists can be selected and that the Grand Council has a ruling voice in the selection. The Congresses or Councils of the thirteen national federations of employers or employed nominate in all 800 persons, or twice the number of Deputies to be elected. These Congresses and Councils are appointed either directly by the Government or by the President of the federation, who is under the "direct and absolute" control of a Minister. The great mass, therefore, of employers and employed have no voice even in the preliminary nomination.<sup>2</sup> A further 200 can be nominated by certain educational or cultural or charitable associations. (This latter category is an excrescence, for the pure Fascist doctrine holds that the members of the state are not citizens but producers. Its crude Marxism leaves out of count the intellectual and aesthetic and social affinities, and bases the political structure almost solely on the economic units of the country.) The Grand Council selects the 400 Deputies, but it need not confine its list to the 1,000 nominated persons, and it may substitute an unlimited number of outsiders, including "persons well known in politics", who of course are prominent Fascists. Its final list is submitted to the electors, but the electors can simply vote "Yes" or "No" for the list as a whole. The franchise

<sup>1</sup> See below, page 58.

<sup>2</sup> Trentin, *Transformations*, 341.

for this purpose is granted to all males over 21 (or 18, if married and with children), who pay 100 *lire* in taxes and rates or own 500 *lire* in state or local securities, or are officials or ecclesiastics, or who are members of a Fascist syndicate and pay the syndical contributions. If the list is rejected on the plebiscite, another election must be held on an ostensibly freer basis, but the opposition can have no organization, no meetings, no election literature, and—except at a time of great popular excitement—the contingency of the Grand Council's list being rejected may be dismissed as impossible. The whole strange system, which even the Fascists seem to have accepted uneasily,<sup>1</sup> is to camouflage the elimination of what Mussolini calls "the humbug of universal democratic suffrage". A Parliament which represents trades and has no touch with the electorate, is bound to be an anaemic organ without influence on the national policy. Nor does Fascism wish it to be otherwise. "We have no desire or need", said Mussolini, "for any political opposition." Fascism boasts that it has reversed the positions of Legislature and Executive. The former is but the servant of the latter; Parliament is to be "a technical institution" to advise on details, but not to control the action of Government or determine the general lines of legislation.<sup>2</sup>

It might be thought that the emasculated Chamber could be safely left to spend its docile life in rhetoric. But Fascism has added another to the barbed-wire defences which protect the autocracy. The Grand Council<sup>3</sup> is the only legal body which possesses real power, but by its constitution it is entirely in the hands of the Chief. It

<sup>1</sup> *Survey of Fascism*, 128.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-113.    <sup>3</sup> See Appendix H.

consists almost solely of high officials of the Fascist party and the Government, and is therefore practically nominated by him; and he can co-opt an unlimited number of others. Its nominal powers are wide. It is "the supreme organ of the state" appointed "to coordinate all the activities" of the revolutionary regime. It selects, as we have seen, the members of the Chamber; it supervises the whole organization and discipline of the Fascist party, and as that party is synonymous with the state, it controls the whole life of the nation. It can remove Deputies who do not vote as it wishes.<sup>1</sup> It has a statutory right to be consulted on all questions concerning the succession to the throne, the powers of the King and the Chief of the Government, the composition of Senate and Chamber, the relations with the Church, and all foreign policy which may involve a change in the national territory. Its meetings are private. No action lies against any member except by consent of the Council itself, and thus it is totally removed from public control. But it is the tied servant of the Chief. He can swamp it with co-opted members, it can meet only when he summons it as "Chief of Fascism", and he decides on its agenda.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Trentin, *Transformations*, 357.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 205-232, 565-568.

#### NOTE

By a Royal Decree dated March 23, 1931, juries have been abolished. In future, criminal cases will come before courts consisting of two judges and five laymen, and the latter must be of "good moral and political behaviour", i.e. Fascists. The Bench thus takes on a purely party complexion. One reason given for the change is that juries are of English origin and must therefore be abandoned by Fascism.

## CHAPTER VI

### FASCISM AND THE PAPACY

#### *Fascist overtures to the Vatican—The Lateran Treaty— The Concordat*

The natural complement of Italian Fascism is the agreement with the Papacy known as the Lateran Treaty. Peace between the two Powers was not easy to consummate. The majority of the original Fascists are anti-clerical, and many of the youths who form so large a section of them were trained in an atmosphere of free thought and criticism. It is not many years since Mussolini preached the nationalization of Church property and voiced his preference for "a pagan people which refuses to believe revealed doctrines and has only contempt for miracles".<sup>1</sup> The Fascists were fiercely hostile to the Christian Democrats, and Mussolini justified the looting of their Cooperative Stores.<sup>2</sup> But there were forces that inevitably drew Pope and Fascists together. The Pope, Pius XI, a reactionary by instinct and training, has small love for the democratic movement inside the Church. Though he protested against the outrages on the Catholic stores, he succeeded soon after the Fascist seizure of power in dealing the Christian Democrats a fatal blow by forbidding Italian priests to take any part in politics; and Mussolini sympathized with his fight against "the fads of political and religious Modernism". They have a common detestation of Freemasons, as an

<sup>1</sup> Trentin, *L'aventure*, 235.

<sup>2</sup> Facsimile in Salvemini, 294.

anti-clerical and Liberal body, whose influence they probably exaggerate; they have a common dislike of Protestants and Jews. Mussolini had to satisfy his supporters among the Nationalists, many of whom are strongly clerical and who probably insisted on a clericalist programme in their pact with Fascism. But above all he saw how immensely he would gain, if he could get the Church to prop his not too secure edifice. With Pope and bishops and the Conservative section of the clergy behind him, he hopes to defy democracy. Soon, therefore, after the March to Rome he began to woo the Vatican. He forgot his free-thinking and paraded his devotion to Catholicism; he introduced Catholic teaching into elementary schools. His overtures were coldly received at the time, and for several years little approach was made, for anti-clerical feeling was still strong among the Fascists, and the astute men at the Vatican were suspicious of his motives. Suddenly, however, things moved fast towards agreement, and in February 1929, just before the election of the Corporative Parliament, a Treaty was concluded. The sixty-year-old feud over the "Vatican City" was solved by surrender to the Papal claims, and the Holy See was recognized as a Sovereign Power with full possession of the city. The Government undertook to pay over 1,750 millions *lire* (nearly £19,000,000) in cash or Government stock. Far more important in the eyes of both parties is the Concordat which formed part of the Treaty. The Catholic faith was retained as the sole religion of the state, other denominations being raised from "tolerated" to "admitted" creeds—a verbal improvement of status. No meetings or demonstrations can be held in Rome which may be deemed offensive to the Papacy. Religious

corporations acquire a legal status and may therefore accumulate property. The state resigns any voice in the appointment of bishops. The Church may call on the arm of the state to support it in the coercion of recalcitrant priests. Religious marriage becomes the legal marriage for Catholics, and although the civil ceremony is recognized as an alternative, it takes an inferior position; certain matrimonial cases come before the ecclesiastical courts. The Catholic University is relieved from interference by the civil authority, and compulsory Catholic education is extended to Secondary Schools. On the other hand the Vatican recognizes the Italian Kingdom with Rome as its capital, the bishops swear neither to take themselves nor allow their clergy to take any action which may prejudice the state or public order, and no ecclesiastic may join a political party.

Who has gained from the Lateran Treaty? So far as its position in Italy is concerned, the Papacy has, from its present point of view, gained very greatly. (It has strengthened its prestige; it has won, at least in theory, the good will and protecting arm of the state; it has planted its monasteries and convents on legal ground; it is better able to cope with the democratic tendencies among the clergy. Most important of all, it has got a grip on education and family life.) Whether it has improved its position as a universal church is more doubtful. It remains to be seen what the world-Catholic Church thinks of a policy which binds it to one state in particular (the Maltese question is a case in point), or how the Catholic Modernists in other countries regard the alliance of Church and State to crush their co-believers in Italy. The Fascists, too, on their side have gained, at all events

for the moment. They have mobilized the higher clergy and many of the priests against Liberals and Socialists and Christian Democrats; and if there is ever again a popular election, they can count on the powerful support of the ecclesiastical army. But while Vatican and Fascists have gained, Italy has only lost. It is perhaps not of primary importance that it has ceded the Vatican City and granted a large sum from its overburdened Budget. It is far more serious that it has restored to the Papacy its old stranglehold on the life of the nation. Thoughtful Fascists are already anxious lest the Church may outweigh the state, and use its mighty power for ends that are repugnant to the great mass of Italians. Thus the elements of suspicion and discord already exist. The Fascist attempt to control thought is bound to bring it into conflict with the spiritual functions of the Church. The atmosphere of the schools may be Fascist or it may be Catholic, it cannot be both. There is friction already, and the compulsory disbandment of the Catholic Boy Scouts and other incidents in the schools have roused the angry protests of the Vatican. Mussolini on his side has had to placate his uneasy followers by promising that the priests shall be under Fascist surveillance, lest they wander from the strait path of obedience to the Government, and the threat is apparently not a dead letter. The Concordat left the position of Protestants rather vague and the Fascists have protected them, perhaps straining the wording of the treaty; the Pope has in consequence protested against the "non-Catholic and even anti-Catholic proselytism which is being carried on in Italy and especially in Rome itself". The Fascist and Vatican presses snarl at each other, and the newspapers have been forbidden to print

certain Papal pronouncements. Two Fascist books have been placed on the Index. The Pope, while gracious to the King, has shown a marked coolness to the *Duce*. The Concordat in fact rests on unstable foundations. An anti-fascist reaction would be bound to denounce it, and with it the Temporal Power may disappear again. And be it remembered that the Pope has undertaken to recognize Italy only so long as the House of Savoy reigns.

## CHAPTER VII

### ITALY UNDER FASCISM

*Fascist Reforms—Trade and Finance—Condition of Workers—The Corporative System—Attack on Free Speech and Association—Persecution of non-fascists*

In the meantime what has Fascism done for the daily life of Italians? In certain directions they have gained. There has been considerable effort to increase the efficiency of the national machine, but much of this effort has been marred by excessive centralization and by the placing in office of incompetent and sometimes dishonest adventurers. As in other revolutions, the place-hunter has found a golden opportunity to plunder the public; political orthodoxy counts for everything, political morality for little. The railway service, which in spite of Mussolini's preference remains in the hands of the state, has improved; the trains run better and there are fewer railway thefts. But the mileage of lines has barely increased, and most of such extensions as are in progress were initiated in pre-fascist days. There has been a reduction in the excessive staff, but this is partly balanced by attaching large numbers of the militia to the trains. Electrification has been encouraged, but no more than was the case before 1923. So, too, though land reclamation proceeds, no more land is being drained than under the constitutional Government, which had already reclaimed nearly half of the derelict areas. Superfluous law courts have been closed. There has been some real reform on the

purely scholastic side in the elementary schools, where the teachers are now less tied by routine, and the curriculum has been brought more on to modern lines. Much Fascist reform, however, is on the surface and appeals more to the foreign visitor than to the native. While the streets are cleaner and better policed, vice has only gone out of sight, and the Mafia has been driven underground.

There is a common belief that Fascism has revived Italian trade, but the facts point, if anything, in the other direction. Already before its advent Italian industry was struggling manfully upwards, and Fascism has not brought prosperity. The present acute depression is perhaps due mainly to world causes, but it is largely the direct result of Fascist rule—the crushing taxation, the artificial stabilization of the *lira*, the cramping consequences of governmental interference. In 1926 the *lira*, whose exchange value had fallen rapidly in the preceding two years, was stabilized at 92½ to the pound sterling. But it was an unreal level; by general testimony it has wrought havoc in trade development, and it is only maintained by financial manipulations. The position of industry is indeed not desperate, but it is very difficult. A few manufactures hold their own, but the engineering trades, iron and steel, motor-cars, building, cotton, silk, and paper are increasingly depressed; there is a serious crisis in shipbuilding, and part of the mercantile marine lies idle; there is a heavy decline in most items of agricultural and horticultural exports. Bankruptcies have trebled since Fascism came into power, and are now at the portentous rate of over 20,000 a year—far more than those of France and Great Britain combined; and although it is true that most of these are in small businesses, some

have been big and shaking failures, and they point to the economic sickness of the country. The prices of most bank stocks and industrial securities have fallen heavily;<sup>1</sup> so too have values of land and houses. It is said that the banks are compelled to come to the help of firms in Fascist hands, but refuse assistance to those which are not in favour with the Government. The Bourse, which is under strict Government surveillance, is completely stagnant.

The adverse trade balance increases and is now about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  milliards *lire* (over £70,000,000), to which must be added  $1\frac{1}{2}$  milliards interest on foreign loans.<sup>2</sup> In the past Italy set off against its adverse balance the remittances home from emigrants in America, money brought in by tourists, and the profits of the mercantile marine. But the emigrants are largely anti-fascist, and for this and other reasons their net remittances have shrunk very materially; the tourist trade has gone down seriously, and the profits of the carrying trade are reduced. We may well credit the rumour that American banks are nervous about their big investments in Italian industries, which probably amount to over £100,000,000. Nor are the state's finances in happier case. Italian 5 per cent. stock, which in 1925 stood at 97, has now gone down to 80—no higher than that of Greece—and is hardly saleable outside the country. Public funds are raided for the

<sup>1</sup> In the twelve months ending December 31, 1929, those of the Bank of Italy from 2,788 to 1,940, and of various textile firms by two-fifths to one-fifth. There have been further heavy falls recently. The Fiat Motor-car Company has gone down from 499 in 1925 to 220, the Rubattino Co. from 711 to 461 in the same period.

<sup>2</sup> *American Commercial Reports*, January 16, 1928, and January 14, 1929; British Department of Overseas Trade, Italy 1930, 27.

benefit of the Treasury, which retains for its own cash requirements appropriations which should go legally to the redemption of debt. In spite of all manoeuvres it is not easy to see how the Government can meet nearly four milliards *lire* of Treasury Bills which mature next November. The deficit on the present year's Budget is likely to reach over one milliard *lire*, and may be greater, for the Government is freely charged with "dexterous accountancy".<sup>1</sup> There is a heavy fall in receipts in spite of new taxation. Expenditure (apart from liquidation of war costs) has mounted under Fascist rule by eight milliards *lire* (over £86,000,000) or 66 per cent.; even if the heavy war cost of pre-fascist years is included, it has increased by five milliards. In the three years from 1924-25 to 1927-28 it increased 40 per cent. The Army, Navy, and Air Budget has more than doubled; the police cost nearly £10,000,000, or about double that of France; local expenditure under the extravagant and sometimes corrupt rule of the *podestàs* has gone up by leaps. Fascism, in fact, with its heavy and growing military expenses, its army of police and spies, its 500,000 civil employees (including the railwaymen) is necessarily very costly.<sup>2</sup> The national expenditure now represents £5 per head of the population, apart from local expenditure and the cost of the syndicates. Although the average individual income is under £24—less than one-third of that of

<sup>1</sup> *Manchester Weekly Guardian*, January 3, 1930. See also Trentin, *L'aventure*, 153, and the recent criticisms of Signors Ancona and Ciccotti in the Senate. Some not very important economies are promised for the Budget of 1931-32, but most of these will be set off by an increased military expenditure of 2½ million £s.

<sup>2</sup> All salaries and wages of civil employees have now been reduced by 12 per cent.

## FASCISM IN ITALY

Great Britain—national and local expenditure take at least 25 per cent. It is on the workers that Fascist economy bears most hardly. Real wages have fallen below their pre-war rate by 13 to 35 per cent. The International Labour Bureau has shown that the wages of artisans are now the lowest in Europe. The average weekly wage of a metal-worker at Turin, where wages are above the average, was till recently 36s., that of an average artisan in the Milan district about 25s.; these figures have recently been reduced by 12 per cent., and many of the men have 5 per cent. deducted for income-tax.<sup>1</sup> Railway-men's wages have also been reduced in the same proportion and now range from 4s. 5d. to 3s. 1d. a day. A textile worker earns 3s. 5d. to 4s. 9d. a day. Agricultural labourers and men on reclamation work have been reduced by 10 to 25 per cent. Some of the former earn 1s. 8d. a day and are on short time; in the province of Milan men are working at 3d. an hour with only thirty hours of work in the week. No exact figures of unemployment can be given, since the official statistics do not include partially unemployed men or agricultural labourers. The official figure has generally fluctuated round 400,000, but in January last went up to 722,000; this should perhaps be doubled to arrive at the real total, which represents  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of a population which is mainly agricultural. Italians crossing the frontier without a permit are liable to be shot at sight, but so dire is the condition of the unemployed that a good many men and women brave the Alpine passes and the rifles of the militia in a desperate effort to find work abroad. Unem-

<sup>1</sup> *New York World*, August 1, 1929; figures published by the Fascist Industrial Union of Milan for September–October, 1929.

ployment benefit is 5s. 4d. a week and lasts for three months only.

Taxation falls heavily on the poor, both in the form of income-tax and rates, and still more in the price of food. The corn duty has been more than doubled in the last three years and is now over  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per lb.; bread of an inferior quality costs about  $2\frac{1}{4}$ d. a lb., and there have been sporadic bread riots. The duty on sugar has been quadrupled and is now nearly 2d. a lb.; that on coffee more than doubles the price; salt, which is a quasi-Government monopoly, has had its price raised 300 per cent. The municipal *octrois* have been abolished recently, but the excise duties which take their place seem likely to fall with at least equal severity on the poor. Although there has been a recent fall in wholesale prices, there has been little reduction in retail prices. The Government decreed a reduction of these by 10 per cent., but naturally the order is a dead letter, and there is now a demand that the Government shall itself take over retail trade, with what results one may conjecture. At all events, with lowered wages and unemployment and heavy prices there is dire poverty in the land, and Mussolini himself has told the Chamber that in the South and Sardinia many have no food but vegetables.

If the worker has lost in wages, he has lost even more in freedom. Before the days of Fascism he could belong to any political party and, at least in the North, vote as he pleased; now he must be a Fascist or lose protection for his wages and weaken his chance of obtaining work at all. Once he was a free member of his Trade Union, and there was a time when the Trade Unions had 2,000,000 members; he could join a self-governed

Cooperative Society. But Fascism made it its aim "to smother all Trade Unionism", and has succeeded, for Trade Unions, if they live at all, live only in secret, and the once mighty General Confederation of Labour is dead. There are few strikes, probably, as a shrewd American observer remarks, because the workers are tired of going to prison. Fascism boasts that it favours Cooperation, but it destroyed the vigorous free village societies of the Christian Democrats and Socialists, and took over and ruined the big distributive societies in the large towns.

The workers' status is governed by the "Corporative" System and the Labour Charter of 1927.<sup>1</sup> These, in a way, hark back to the more generous ideals of early Fascism and have checked the pure anti-labour reaction of 1922 to 1927, but they have strangely metamorphosed the revolutionary syndicalist theory into a scheme which binds the whole of Italian industrial life, body and soul, to the state. It is the nearest approach to State Socialism which has been made outside Russia. It and the electoral system which is based on it assume that the national life is built on men *quâ* producers, and it takes little count of activities other than the economic. And since the people have on the Fascist theory no rights against the Government and cannot be trusted to act wisely or obey,<sup>2</sup> the state, that is the Fascist Government, must control every relation of capital and labour. Each great group of trades has its "corporation", to which both employers and employed must belong. A corporation itself is a nebulous body, except for electoral purposes; the real life lies in its

<sup>1</sup> Appendices J and K.

<sup>2</sup> *Survey of Fascism*, 112-113; Ferrari, 284-285.

constituents, the "syndicates", each syndicate embracing the employers and employed of a single trade in a locality. None but those who can "guarantee good political conduct", i.e. Fascists at least in name, can be members, and non-fascists are in a sense outlaws without legal status and unprotected by the state. No non-fascist can enforce his wages contract, and he is at the mercy of his employer. Under the Labour Charter a recognized syndicate of employers and employed must make a collective bargain which is binding on both parties and must "express the conciliation of their opposing interests and their subordination to the superior interests of production"; it is easy to see how this proviso may be twisted to the detriment of the workers. The syndicates are subject to the unlimited control of the Government, and their officers and their more important decisions must be submitted to its approval. Strikes are prohibited even when an employer breaks his contract,<sup>1</sup> and any combination to promote them is a criminal offence punishable by not less than a year's imprisonment; lock-outs are equally illegal, but an easy loop-hole allows them when an employer can prove "a just motive". All collective disputes on wages or conditions of labour come before special "labour magistrates" who are practically unrestrained by law or custom. It is perhaps early yet to say whether these magistrates act fairly to the workers, but the vague phrasing of the Charter gives them an almost unbounded power to depress wages, and there is evidence that governmental pressure is sometimes exerted to insist on reductions. The employers on their side may engage men only through a Labour Exchange and must

<sup>1</sup> Ferrari, 270, note (2).

give the preference to the Fascists on its lists. They are responsible to the Government for the way in which they conduct their business. If a firm does not in the opinion of the state officials show sufficient initiative, or "where the political interests of the state are involved", it may be placed under official supervision or taken over by the Government. I can find no evidence as to whether this has been done in the case of industries, but action has been taken in the case of several landowners who had neglected their estates. All employers and workers, even if they have not joined a syndicate, must contribute to a fund which will cover the syndical expenses and find the salaries of the numerous and well-paid officials. The annual contribution of each worker may amount to a day's wages and employers pay one-third per cent. of their wages bill. The total reaches nearly £3,000,000 a year.

The Charter is said to have been drafted after little consultation with the organizations of employers or workers, and it appears to have been the work of Syndicalist theorists. It has its good features, but it is an artificial system which refuses to be assimilated; it was not spontaneously evolved by either employers or workers and it is desired by neither. It is designed, in fact, to serve the aims of a political party as much as for any end of social betterment. It leaves no room for freedom or initiative, it discourages individual or class self-effort. Its keynote is stability, not progress, and its result is and must be stagnation. There is quiet on the surface and the orders of the Labour Magistrates are obeyed, for the alternative is imprisonment. But there is deep discontent beneath. The employers deplore their lack of freedom

and the political interference which clogs their efforts, and they have voiced their complaints in the Chamber. The workers are silent on compulsion, but one can surmise the feelings of the Socialists and Communists who for the sake of a livelihood have crowded into the syndicates, taking the name of Fascists, but true to their old faiths at heart. They are said to work without interest and with smaller output. In spite of the semi-outlawry of those who remain outside the syndicates, a half of the industrial employers, more than two-thirds of the industrial workers, and five-sixths of the agricultural workers have refused to come in.<sup>1</sup> The imposing system, which Fascism vaunts as its great example to the world, has no life in it and must of necessity decay.

The same repression, the same consequent absence of breath and movement, is seen in almost every sphere of the national life. All freedom—free speech, free writing, free association, free industry—is sacrificed to the interests of a political sect. No Limited Company with a capital of over £50,000 may be started, no Company of any size may increase its capital without the permission of the Minister of Finance. He can forbid the importation or exportation of any commodity. Every retail tradesman must obtain a licence, and the Government has openly stated that its purpose is to kill out the small shopkeeper.<sup>2</sup> No advocate or teacher or doctor or journalist may practise without the approval of a special Fascist Committee, and unless his conduct is "irreproachable from the political point of view", that is, unless he is a professed Fascist. A teacher whose ideas are not those of the

<sup>1</sup> *Riforma Sociale*, November–December, 1930, pp. 547–548.

<sup>2</sup> Ferrari, 278.

Government can be dismissed, and in at least one court the police notified suspect advocates that they could not practise unless they signed a declaration renouncing their past so far as it implied any open or secret dissension from the Fascist creed. The case of the journalist is harder still. He may not practise without a police certificate and a testimonial "to his moral and political probity", in other words, to his adherence to the party in power. The Fascists have struck hard at the Press. In their early days of power all the leading newspapers were anti-fascist, and their large circulation was a constant menace to Fascist rule. Some of them the Fascists bought up; the rest were crushed by a Press Law which empowers a Prefect to confiscate any issue which "abuses the constitutional institutions or authority of the state", i.e. which criticizes the Government. The Press is now purely Fascist and serves out such news as the Government allows, but the public know how systematically this is falsified. Little political news from abroad is permitted, and most foreign criticism of the Government is excluded. Reports of discontent at home, sometimes even the Pope's strictures, are banned. The natural result is that the public are slow to buy, and prefer the clandestine news-sheets and leaflets, whose circulation is said to be very large.<sup>1</sup> The recent raid on the intellectuals<sup>2</sup> shows how much the Government fears them.

The Fascists devote special care to the "fasticization" of the whole educational system. They hope to train up a generation which shall accept their views whole-heartedly, and they know that at present feeling in the universities

<sup>1</sup> The secret organization, *Giustizia e Libertà*, prints 100,000 of each of its leaflets.

<sup>2</sup> See below, p. 67.

and secondary schools is predominantly hostile. The elementary textbooks "must possess the spirit of Fascism", and they show this in their grotesque militarism; the children are pressed into Fascist corps on a semi-military footing, they sing hymns such as "O *Duce*, thou art the light", and Mussolini's portrait is hung on the school walls between smaller portraits of the King and Pope. This insipid glorification of Mussolini and war perhaps may have an effect quite other than what is intended on the critical and subtle Italian child. The Government is now attempting to purge the Universities. Under a law of last year all Rectors of Universities and, preferably, all Deans of Faculties and all secondary teachers must be Fascists or are liable to dismissal; and men whose names are known through Europe live under a Damocles' sword. (The object is to crush out independent thought.) "The philosopher", it was stated in the Chamber, "is an inferior intellectual type. The political realism of Fascism imposes the categorical imperative to submit and obey."

(Mussolini has boasted that Fascism "does not care a straw for the mysterious divinity called public opinion".) It is nearer the truth that the Government does not dare to allow its expression. Police permission is required for all political meetings, which means that no anti-fascist meetings can be held. All meetings for scientific discussion or charitable purposes or even sport must have the preliminary consent of the Prefect. The Philosophical Congress of Milan in 1926 was abruptly dissolved because of its implied criticism of the Government. Every association of whatever nature must furnish the police with

its rules and list of members, and the Prefect may dissolve and seize the property of a society which in any way opposes the ruling power. When the ex-service men's league attacked the Government after the Matteotti murder, Mussolini suppressed its central organization and substituted a committee appointed by himself. The National Association of Professors is confined to men who are "politically faithful". Catholic Associations may not deal with any subject which is directly or indirectly political. It is dangerous even to talk politics, for it is a crime, punishable by not less than three years' imprisonment, to express any ideas which are not in conformity with those of the Government, and the police are sole judges of the offence.<sup>1</sup> Any attempt to reconstitute a dissolved Liberal or Socialist society may meet with five years' penal servitude. Political offences are tried by a special military court composed chiefly of militia officers.

The persecution of the Government's opponents continues, but on new lines. The ruffianism of the Fascist bands has nearly disappeared and the countryside can breathe, but political repression has been legalized, and the Terror is succeeded by a calculated cruelty, which is the more atrocious because it is the work of an organized Government. Under the Law of Public Safety of 1926<sup>2</sup> a person "rumoured to be dangerous to the national order of the state"—a vague phrase which may be and is twisted to include any criticism of the Government—may be "admonished" by a local Fascist committee, and

<sup>1</sup> Trentin, *Transformations*, 415; Penal Code, Art. 272.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix E. The law, worthy of the Jacobins and the Soviet, was to expire this year, but has now been embodied in the new Penal Code.

must then live in one place and under strict police supervision. By a refinement of insolence the Law classes active anti-fascists with "exploiters of women" and "venders of noxious drugs". Or the more obnoxious of their victims may be sent (sometimes heavily chained) to the compulsory domicile of a penal settlement. In one or other of the islands near Sicily, where the Neapolitan Bourbons sent their victims and for it were execrated by the civilized world, Fascist Italy commits its political opponents to a life of hardship and degradation. Here they are crowded with ordinary criminals in foul and unventilated lodgings, they are fed on bad, sometimes loathsome, food, and in Lipari in summer drink water which has been brought by boat from Sicily. They are guarded by a brutal police, often beaten and wounded, and torture is not unknown.<sup>1</sup> Their living allowance has been reduced to 1s. 1d. a day. There are probably over 1,000 of them—professors, barristers, journalists, clerks, artisans, peasants, a general, the Grand Master of Italian Freemasonry, Slavs from the annexed provinces who have opposed Fascist centralization. One man's crime was that his brother, quite unassisted by himself, had escaped from the island where he was interned; another's (he is nephew of an ex-Premier) that he was "too serious for his age" and therefore a mystery to the police. On the mainland the prisons overflow with men

<sup>1</sup> F. F. Nitti's *Nos prisons et notre évasion* (translated into English under the title of *Escape*) gives a vivid picture of the penal settlements. See also Lussu in *Atlantic Monthly*, June and July 1930; *Review of Reviews*, September 1929; *Manchester Weekly Guardian*, December 6, 1929; *Liberty*, December 22, 1929. A few foreigners, who were allowed to visit the settlements under careful police conduct, have attempted to deny the facts; for the ruses to dupe them, see M. Henri Béraud in the *Petit Parisien*.

sentenced to long terms of imprisonment (one-sixth of it in solitary confinement) for having been members of the Socialist or Communist parties at a time when those parties were still legal, for suspicion of being Communists, for helping the families of political prisoners, for distributing anti-fascist leaflets, for speaking insultingly of Mussolini, for congratulating a member of the Senate on a speech against the Lateran Treaty. Five political suspects have died mysteriously in prison, and no post-mortem was allowed.<sup>1</sup>

There is no escape for those who have incurred suspicion. (There are spies at every street corner,<sup>2</sup> letters are opened in the post, no one may move from town to town without an identity paper, which the police may grant or refuse at their discretion.) The families of exiles, even motherless children, are carefully guarded as hostages and are subject to petty persecution.<sup>3</sup> A few of the victims have made dramatic escapes. The case of the Rosselli brothers is fairly well known in England and America. Professor Carlo Rosselli, son of one of Mazzini's closest friends, was among those who helped the veteran Socialist Turati to fly from a life of police persecution; for this he was sent to the penal settlement of Lipari. Thanks to the efforts of the Italian exiles, he escaped, and in revenge his wife and brother were arrested. The former, who was expecting to be confined, was herded with women of bad fame, but fortunately she is an Englishwoman and the Government was frightened by the outcry in the English Press. The

<sup>1</sup> *Italy To-Day*, VII.

<sup>2</sup> Details of espionage on foreign journalists in *New York Evening Post*, June 21, 1930.

<sup>3</sup> *Manchester Weekly Guardian*, October 17, 1930.

Italian Ambassador in London denied her arrest, but when the fact was too patent she was released. The brother, an historian of some distinction, who had taken no part in politics, was sent to the worst of the penal islands, and would still be there had not English protests secured his release also. Fortunately for the exiles France has given them a safe asylum, and not all the venom of the Fascist Press nor the manufactured plots of the Italian police-agents have weakened the humane tolerance of the French Government.

#### NOTE

While these pages were being written the Government, on the information of an *agent provocateur*, arrested twenty-four more or less prominent "intellectuals"—professors, teachers, lawyers, officers—all men of moderate views and most of them Liberals or Conservatives—apparently on the charge of having printed and circulated two clandestine papers, both anti-fascist, but one of a very mild and monarchical complexion. Their action has apparently been construed as a conspiracy against the state, and as such comes before a tribunal chiefly of militia officers. The procedure of the court is that of the Military Code, the trial may be held *in camera*, and the accused may have no counsel other than a militia officer appointed by the court. The penalty is death or long imprisonment. Two of the accused have been condemned to fifteen years' and one to three years' penal servitude. One committed suicide in prison. Ten have been released. The remainder are still awaiting trial. Vigorous protests have been made by influential persons in France, England, and Belgium, and these perhaps have made the Government pause.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FUTURE OF FASCISM

#### *Strength and weakness of Fascism—Fascism and Mussolini —Foreign Policy—Danger to Europe*

Fascism is a great and portentous fact, which has challenged the whole march of democracy, has challenged alike Liberalism and Socialism. But has it come to stay in the country of its birth? On the surface it seems securely set. There is no overt resistance beyond small sporadic revolts, for resistance is too dangerous in front of the 300,000 rifles and revolvers of the militia. There is no centre round which disaffection can cluster. There is no free Parliament, there are no free local institutions. The Crown is corroded by the general contempt for the King's weakness and his repeated breakings of the coronation oath which pledged him to maintain the institutions of the country; it is powerless to resent its own humiliation and must passively await its fate. The non-fascists, debarred from all political rights, cut off from a livelihood save at the price of surrender, harried by militia and police, their leaders in prison or exile, are for the moment cowed into sullen acquiescence. The Fascists claim 1,100,000 registered members, and nearly four millions in their syndicates—after all no overwhelming number in a population of 42 millions, but still an impressive figure. But we do not know how many have joined from fear, how many to earn a livelihood and save their families from starvation, how many from belief in Mussolini

rather than Fascism, how many are in the volatile fringe which would be the first to desert a decaying cause. We do know that inside the syndicates a large number of the men, even among the officials, are Socialists or Communists, and hold in secret to their faith. We know too that the Fascist press finds few readers, that the clandestine papers and leaflets circulate widely, perhaps very widely, and that so far the Government has been powerless to stop them. There is a secret anti-fascist organization, whose strength, however, it is difficult to measure. The Fascist ranks are rent by bitter feuds, and the rifts will grow at any sign of collapse. They themselves are uneasy at the large number of unbelievers who have taken their name in order to pick up what they can, and there is a cry for a purge of the insincere. The adulation of the *Duce* which fills the press and adorns speeches in the Chamber is not all pure hero-worship. Salted quips at their rulers and at the vulgar ostentation of the men whom Fascism has lifted from poverty to wealth make part of the staple talk of the disillusioned middle classes. In the universities and secondary schools, in spite of desperate attempts to "fasticize" them, feeling is decidedly hostile. Among the artisans and peasants we may be sure that the men who have seen their clubs and stores destroyed and their leaders clubbed or murdered, nurse a revenge which, when the chance comes, may be a savage one. The crowds which cheered Mussolini's speeches in Tuscany and Lombardy last summer are quoted as evidence of his popularity among the masses; the reports did not mention that fifteen train-loads of Black Shirts followed him to swell and overawe the crowd, that workshops were closed and the men driven to his meetings

under pain of dismissal, that his arrival at each town was preluded by the arrest of suspects by the hundred. In spite of all, his speech at Milan had a chilly reception. Centralized state socialism has taught the masses, suffering from low wages and high prices, to charge their troubles to the Government at Rome, in the last resort to the *Duce* himself. The subtle Italians scribble on the walls *Viva il duce, viva la fame!* (cheers for the Chief and hunger). What if the Corporative system, which sags already, breaks under the restiveness of masters and men, and with it goes the electoral basis of Parliament? Fascism must then choose between unveiled autocracy and surrender.

Financial clouds gather fast. Taxation is very oppressive on all classes. Manufactures and commerce languish, the rate of exchange is unhealthy, all recent attempts to raise a foreign loan have so far failed, and the Government does not know how to balance its budget. And above all the dire poverty of the underpaid and overtaxed masses constitutes a danger which smoulders now, but may at any moment burst into flames. But the plainest evidence of weakness lies in the nervousness of the Government. The suppression of a free Press, the cruelty to opponents, the admonitions and imprisonments and deportations, the abominable holding of hostages, the exile of some of the best men of the nation, the manufactured plots to defame them—all the long tale of oppression is due as much to fear as to brutality. The Fascists hope to prop their shaking power by terrorism, perhaps believe that a cowed nation, which has no traditions of civic courage, may come in time to accept their rule. For the moment their calculations are perhaps correct. But Fascism has so

built itself round one man that if the keystone is removed the whole edifice will crumble. It is pretty clear that Mussolini himself realizes how precarious the position is, and he acknowledges that the present generation will never be sincerely Fascist. In some directions he has grown more cautious. Eight years ago he said that it was to the interest of Italy to aid in the destruction of the British Empire;<sup>1</sup> now he obtains testimonials from English statesmen and loans pictures to London. For very necessary financial reasons he tries to soothe American suspicion by dissolving the Fascist organization in the States.<sup>2</sup> But on the Continent his policy is dangerous as ever. The tension between Italy and France has grown ever since Fascism came into power, and still is hardly relaxed. France is calm on the surface, but she is intensely irritated by the feverish increase of Italian armaments, by Mussolini's bellicose speeches, by wild talk about recovering Nice, by the scandal of Italian police plots on her own territory. So long, however, as her supremacy in the Mediterranean is safe, there is no fear of a rupture from her. There is no such security on the other side. It is impossible to say with any certainty what is Mussolini's real policy at the moment. To Englishmen and Americans he displays a melodramatic enthusiasm for peace; in Italy he sings the praises of machine-guns and cannons and speaks openly of war, hinting with sufficient plainness that the enemy is France.<sup>3</sup> The Naval Pact, made in defiance of his emphatic declarations of last year, seems on the surface a move towards a more

<sup>1</sup> Villari, *Awakening of Italy*, 208.

<sup>2</sup> His recent action against General Butler was a great political mistake and has done him much harm.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix C.

pacific policy, but it is at least possible that it is due less to a change of mind than to the fact that there is little money to build more ships; or perhaps the dominant motive is the need of an American loan, which cannot be had without a gesture of peace. Both roles cannot be sincere, for not even his amazing versatility can reconcile them. But which represents his real thought? It may be, as it has been convenient to assume, that his recent war speeches are for home consumption, to divert attention from domestic questions and stop the dead-rot in Italy. It is difficult to believe that he does not realize that war with an empty treasury, against the greatly superior French Army (with Jugoslavia thrown in), with the ill-will of the world mobilized against a disturber of the peace, means almost certain disaster to his country and his party. But he possibly hopes—some of his party certainly hope—for a Fascist-Soviet League against France and her allies. For this he courts Russia and exults in any progress of the Hitlerites and Heimwehr. Fascism has never abandoned its ambitions in Dalmatia and Albania, the latter of which is practically an Italian outpost. Emigration has been almost stopped by the Government (there has been some relaxation lately for temporary emigration) in order to swell the man-strength of the nation, and the consequent pressure of population calls for a vent in new colonies, almost necessarily at the expense of France. And so he talks of Italy insisting on her rights “in the crucial years between 1935 and 1940”, and a Fascist Deputy preaches a war of propaganda which will “crush the enemy”, that is, constitutional Europe.

With a leader of Mussolini's unstable temperament

the future can never be safe, and there are two forces which may precipitate a crisis. The internal situation may at any moment become so dangerous that he may decide to risk all in a war, in the hope that the acquisition of the Dalmatian coast or new colonies in Africa may restore his tottering prestige. Or he may find it impossible to check the war-spirit which he has fanned. He has encouraged 60,000 volunteers to offer for service in Dalmatia, and at Bari the Black Shirts recently attacked the French and Jugoslavian consulates. When he spoke at Milan last summer the young Fascists in the crowd sang, "We will go to Nice and hold a tourney there"; and so unreflective is the complacency of many of them that they believe Italy to be a match for France. If it suits his purpose, or because of the emptiness of the Treasury, he may be able to hold them in; but there is always the not impossible contingency that the hotheads will create a situation which will compel the Government to mobilize. The peril is a real one, and Fascism is and by its nature must be a standing threat to European peace.



## APPENDIX A

### *Fascist Programme for the Election of 1919*

ITALIAN FIGHTING FASCI,  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE, MILAN

#### ITALIANS—

The following is the national programme of a movement which is soundly and entirely Italian; revolutionary because it is opposed to theories or demagoguery; stoutly innovating because it takes no account of *a priori* objections.

We put the realization of the revolutionary war above everything and everybody. The remaining problems (reform of the Civil Service, administration, education, the recasting of the judicial system, colonial policy, etc.) will be considered by us when our labours have created the controlling class.

In consequence we desire—

In the political programme:

(a) Universal suffrage with large constituencies to ensure the proportional representation of the electors, and the participation of women in political life, whether as electors or elected;

(b) A reduction of the age of electors to 18 years and of membership of the Chamber of Deputies to 25 years;

(c) The abolition of the Senate;

(d) The convocation of a National Assembly (to sit

for three years) on which shall be conferred the power to establish the new Constitution of the state;

(e) The formation of national technical Councils of Labour, Industry, Communications, Public Health, etc., elected by Corporations of professions or trades, and provided with legislative powers and the right to elect a Commissioner-General who shall have the rights and functions of a Minister.

In the social programme:

(a) The prompt enactment of a law which shall make a legal day of eight hours compulsory for all workers;

(b) Minimum salaries for workers;

(c) The participation of workers' representatives in the technical functioning of industry;

(d) The handing over to the same proletarian organizations (provided that they merit it on moral and technical grounds) of the management of public industries and services;

(e) The prompt and complete satisfaction of the claims of the out-of-work;

(f) The reduction of the proposed age for Old Age Pensions from 65 to 55.

In the military programme:

(a) The creation of a national militia which shall be on very short service from the moment when its end becomes exclusively defensive;

(b) The nationalization of all factories for armaments, and munitions;

(c) A foreign policy which aims at asserting the Italian nation in works of peace;

In the financial programme:

(a) A heavy extraordinary tax on capital at progressive rates, with the understanding that its object is to lead up to a partial expropriation of all wealth;

(b) The seizure of all property belonging to religious associations and the suppression of all episcopal revenues, which at present inflict an enormous expense on the nation while constituting a prerogative for a few privileged persons;

(c) The revision of all contracts for war materials and the appropriation of 85 per cent. of war profits.

## APPENDIX B

*Extracts from article written by Mussolini in the Popolo d'Italia of March 15, 1924, after the bludgeoning of the Deputy Forni. (Facsimile of his MS. in Salvemini, 290.)*

What exactly has happened? At the delicate moment of an electoral campaign the so-called Dissident Fascists have played into the hands of the Opposition and thus have assisted the enemies of Fascism. . . . Their crime is evident and abominable. . . . Bolshevism has "physically" suppressed the Mensheviks. No better fate befell the Revolutionary Socialists of Russia. . . . Is it not criminal insolence for the unclean reptiles of the Italian subversive parties that are not yet stamped out by the Fascist Party to raise a howl if some traitor to Fascism is chastised more or less noisily? We are still a long way from the Russian system. When a party has assumed the tremendous responsibility of directing the destinies of a nation, it has the right and duty to be inflexible towards its enemies, still more to those who desert it and go over to the enemy. In any case, Fascism is following the example of your comrades in Russia, you scoundrels of the Italian Socialist Party. Who betrays, perishes.

## APPENDIX C

*Extract from Mussolini's speech at Florence, May 17, 1930*

There are also other enemies [besides Italian anti-fascists], above all the phenomenal ignorance of those outside our borders who think that we are still a small people and do not realize that we are advancing towards 43 millions of souls. . . . Nothing is more insulting to the pride of the Italian people than the suspicion that our recent naval programme is something that will not be realized. I assert here that it will be realized, every ton. . . . I am certain that the Italian people, in order not to remain prisoners in the sea which was once the sea of Rome, will be capable of even exceptional sacrifices. . . . You will to-morrow morning see here an imposing review of the Army. I have ordered this myself; for words are a very fine thing, but rifles, machine-guns, ships, aeroplanes, cannons are much finer things.

*Extracts from the Electoral Law of May 17, 1928*

1. The number of deputies for the whole Kingdom is 400. The whole Kingdom forms a single constituency.
2. The election of deputies is made:

- (1) On the nomination of the bodies indicated in Articles 3 and 4;
- (2) On the designation of the National Grand Council of Fascism;
- (3) With the approval of the electors.

3. The power to nominate candidates belongs in the first place to the national federations of legally recognized syndicates. These bodies nominate a total number of candidates equal to twice the number to be elected. . . . The nomination of candidates for each federation is made by its national or general council. The meetings to decide on the nominations shall be held at Rome. . . .

4. Moral institutions which are legally recognized, and associations (even if existing only in fact) which possess a national importance and pursue objects of culture or education or charity or propagandism can also nominate candidates. This right to nominate is conferred by Royal Decree. . . . The bodies referred to above can propose a number of candidates equal to half the number to be elected. . . .

5. . . . The Grand Council draws up the list of designated deputies, selecting them at its discretion from the list of candidates, and even outside it when it is necessary to include in the list persons of great reputation

in science, literature, art, politics, or the army, who have not been included in the list of candidates. . . .

6. The voting for the approval of the list of designated deputies . . . shall be by means of papers bearing the emblem of the lictor's rods and the formula, "Do you approve the list of candidates designated by the National Grand Council of Fascism?" The vote "Yes" or "No" is written below the formula.

8. If the designated list of deputies is not approved, the Court of Appeal at Rome orders a second election with competing lists. . . . For this second election all the associations and organizations which include 5,000 electors can present lists of candidates. Each list shall not include more than three-quarters of the deputies to be elected.

9. . . The sum of the votes obtained by each list is published. All the candidates on the list which obtains the greatest number of votes are declared elected. The seats reserved for the minority are divided among the other lists in proportion to the number of votes obtained by each. . . .

10. The vote, under Articles 6 and 9, is conferred on Italian citizens who are 21 years of age or who, being minors, are over 18 and married and have children, provided that they

- (a) pay a contribution to a syndicate, . . . or
- (b) pay at least 100 *lire* in state or local taxes, or have for at least one year owned state or local bonds bringing in 500 *lire*, or
- (c) draw a salary or pension from the state or a local body, or
- (d) are members of the Catholic clergy, secular or regular, or are ministers of another admitted denomination.

## APPENDIX E

### *Extracts from Royal Decree of November 6, 1926, on Public Safety*

158. Any person who outside his own commune raises suspicion by his conduct, and who cannot or will not justify himself by producing a card of identity or by other trustworthy means . . . may, if the suspicions are well-founded, be required to return to his home.

160. Any person who without being provided with a passport leaves or tries to leave the country is, if his action is due to political reasons, punishable by imprisonment for three years at least and a fine which shall not be less than 20,000 *lire* (£216).

Those persons who in any way assist the preparation or execution of this crime are liable to the same penalty. The use of firearms is permitted to prevent improper crossings of the frontier.

166. The chief police officer of the district may denounce to the Prefect, as a case for admonition, idle persons, . . . exploiters of women, venders of noxious drugs, . . . and those who are pointed out by public rumour as dangerous to the national order of the state.

168. The admonition is pronounced by a Provincial Commission consisting of the Prefect, the Royal Procurator, the Superintendent of Police, the Provincial Commander of Police, and a superior officer of the militia.

173. In the case of a person so pointed out the Commission may require him to find work and observe the laws, . . . and not leave his domicile without informing

the local authority for public safety. He may not return home late at night or leave home in the morning before a certain hour, or carry arms, or habitually frequent cafés or brothels, or attend public meetings.

184. The following may be assigned to a compulsory domicile under police supervision, with an obligation to work, if they are a danger to the public safety:

- (1) Those who have received an admonition;
- (2) Those who have committed or shown a deliberate design to commit any act calculated to violently disturb the national, social, or economic ordinances of the state . . . or to impede the working of the functions of the state in such a manner as in any way to injure the national interests in relation to the internal or international situation of the state.

185. A compulsory domicile lasts from one to five years, and is made in a colony or in a commune of the Kingdom other than the ordinary residence of the confined person.

190. A person assigned to a compulsory domicile may be required . . . not to frequent public meetings, spectacles, or public entertainments, to conduct himself well, and not give cause for suspicion.

## APPENDIX F

### *Extracts from Law of November 25, 1926, for the Defence of the State<sup>1</sup>*

1. A person who commits any action directed against the life or person or personal liberty of the King or Regent is punishable by death. The same penalty applies if the action is directed against the life, person, or personal liberty of the Queen, the heir to the throne, or the Chief of the Government. . . .

3. If two or more persons conspire to commit one of the acts referred to in the preceding Articles, they are punishable, for the mere fact of conspiring, by imprisonment for 5 to 15 years. The chiefs, promoters, and organizers of the conspiracy are punishable by imprisonment for 15 to 30 years.

A person who publicly or through the press incites to one of the crimes referred to in the preceding Articles or defends it, is punishable by imprisonment for 5 to 15 years.<sup>2</sup>

4. A person who reconstitutes, even under a different name, any association, organization, or party which has been dissolved by order of the public authority, is punishable by imprisonment for 3 to 10 years and by permanent exclusion from public office. A person who is a member of such association, organization, or party is punishable by imprisonment for 2 to 5 years and by permanent

<sup>1</sup> Some of these Articles are now embodied in the new Penal Code.

<sup>2</sup> In 1910-12 Mussolini published apologies for the assassin of King Humbert and the would-be assassin of the present King. Salvemini,

exclusion from public office. A person who by any means propagates the doctrines, opinions, or methods of such associations is liable to the same penalty.

5. A person who, outside the territory of the state, spreads or in any way communicates false, exaggerated, or tendentious rumours or news on the internal condition of the state in such manner as to lessen the credit or prestige of the state abroad, or who practises actions tending to prejudice the national interests, is punishable by imprisonment for 5 to 15 years and permanent exclusion from public office. In such case a sentence pronounced in contumacy carries with it the loss of citizenship and the confiscation of property. The judge may substitute sequestration for confiscation. . . .

7. The crimes referred to in the present Law shall come before a special tribunal consisting of a president chosen among the generals of the Army or Navy or Air Force or voluntary militia and five judges chosen among the officers of the voluntary militia, with the rank of consul. . . . Their procedure shall be governed by the provisions of the Military Penal Code in time of war. No appeal is allowed against the sentences of the special tribunal.

8. The present Law . . . ceases to have effect at the expiration of five years from this date.

## APPENDIX G

### *Extracts from Law of December 24, 1925, on the powers and prerogatives of the Chief of the Government*

2. The Chief of the Government, who is Prime Minister and Secretary of State, is appointed and dismissed by the King and is responsible to the King for the general political direction of the Government. . . . The Ministers, who are Secretaries of State, are appointed and dismissed by the King on the advice of the Chief of the Government, who is Prime Minister. They are responsible to the King and the Chief of the Government for all the acts and measures of their Ministries. . . .

5. No motion can be placed on the orders of the day of either of the two Chambers without the consent of the Chief of the Government.

The Chief of the Government has the power to require that a Bill thrown out by either of the two Chambers shall be put to the vote when three months at least have expired since the first vote. In this case a vote is taken without debate by secret ballot.

9. A person who is guilty of a direct act against the life or person or liberty of the Chief of the Government is punishable by imprisonment for more than 15 years, and if he attains his object, with hard labour. A person who insults the Chief of the Government by word or act is punishable by imprisonment or detention for 6 to 30 months and by a fine of 500 to 3,000 *lire*.

## APPENDIX H

### *Extracts from Law of December 8, 1928, on Grand Council of Fascism*

1. The Grand Council of Fascism is the supreme organ which coordinates and embraces all the activities of the regime which issued from the revolution of October 1922. For this purpose it is granted deliberative functions in the cases provided for by law, and is also empowered to give advice on any political, economic, or social questions of national interest, when the Chief of the Government demands it.

2. The Chief of the Government, who is Prime Minister and Secretary of State, is by right President of the Grand Council of Fascism. He summons it when he considers it necessary and settles its agenda.

3. The Secretary of the National Fascist Party is Secretary of the Grand Council. . . .

4. The members of the Grand Council, by virtue of their office and during their tenure of it, are:

- (1) the President of the Senate and the President of the Chamber of Deputies;
- (2) the Ministers, being Secretaries of State;
- (3) the Under-Secretary of State;
- (4) the Commanding Officer of the voluntary militia for national security;
- (5) the members of the Directory of the National Fascist Party;
- (6) the President of the Academy of Italy and the President of the Fascist Institute of Culture;

- (7) the President of the national Balilla organization;
- (8) the President of the special tribunal for the defence of the state;
- (9) the Presidents of the National Fascist Federations of recognized syndicates;
- (10) the President of the National Organization for Cooperation. . . .

7. The Chief of the Government may by decree nominate as member of the Grand Council for a period of three years with power of reappointment any persons who have deserved well of the nation and the Fascist revolution. . . .

9. No member of the Grand Council may be arrested, except in case of flagrant crime, or is liable to criminal prosecution, or compelled to appear before a police inquiry, without the authority of the Grand Council. No disciplinary measure can be taken against a member of the Grand Council who belongs to the National Fascist Party, except after deliberation by the Grand Council.

10. . . . The sittings of the Grand Council are secret. . .

11. The Grand Council deliberates:

- (1) on the list of Deputies designated for election under the terms of Article 5 of the Law of May 17, 1928;
- (2) on the statutes, regulations, and political direction of the National Fascist Party.
- (3) on the nomination or dismissal of the Secretaries and other members of the Directory of the National Fascist Party.

12. The opinion of the Grand Council must be heard on all questions possessing a constitutional character. Such questions shall be deemed to be any proposals of law regarding:

- (1) the succession to the throne and the powers and prerogatives of the Crown;
- (2) the composition and procedure of the Grand Council, the Senate, and the Chamber of Deputies;
- (3) the powers and prerogatives of the Chief of the Government;
- (4) the power of the Executive to publish rules for the conduct of courts of law;
- (5) the rules of Syndicates and Corporations;
- (6) the relations between the state and the Holy See;
- (7) international treaties involving an alteration in the territory of the state or colonies, or any surrender of territory.

13. The Grand Council, on the proposition of the Chief of the Government, draws up the list of names to be submitted to the Crown for the nomination of the Chief of the Government in the event of a vacancy.

14. The secretaries and other members of the Directory of the National Fascist Party are nominated by decree of the Chief of the Government after deliberation by the Grand Council.

## APPENDIX I

### *Extracts from Law of December 31, 1925, on the Press*

1. Every newspaper or periodical publication shall have a responsible director who . . . must be approved by the Procurator-General attached to the Court of Appeal of the district.

3. The printer and editor must furnish a list of the titles and addresses of all the proprietors.

7. In every town where there is a Court of Appeal there shall be an order of journalists. . . . Those journalists only who are inscribed on the registers of the order may exercise their profession.

### *Royal Decree of July 15, 1923*

2. The Prefect of a province is empowered . . . to address a warning to the manager of a newspaper or periodical publication :

- (1) if by means of false or tendentious news it impedes the diplomatic action of the Government in its foreign relations, or injures the national credit at home or abroad, or creates unjustifiable alarm in the population, or disturbs public order;
- (2) if by means of articles, comments, notes, headlines, or illustrations it incites to crime or excites class hatred or disobedience to the laws and orders of the public authorities, or compromises the discipline of public servants, or favours the

interests of foreign states, societies, or individuals to the prejudice of Italian interests, or holds up to opprobrium the King, the Royal Family, the Sovereign Pontiff [the Pope], the religion of the state, or the institutions and organs of the state or friendly Powers. . . .

3. On the advice of the Commission referred to in the preceding Article the Prefect may cancel the recognition of a responsible manager to whom two warnings have been addressed in one year.

4. Newspapers or other periodical literature published in contravention of the preceding dispositions may be sequestered.

## APPENDIX J

### *Extracts from the Charter of Labour*

9. The intervention of the state in economic production takes place only when private initiative fails or is insufficient, or when the political interests of the state are involved. This intervention may take the form of control or encouragement or direct management.

12. The action of a syndicate, the conciliatory efforts of the corporative organs, and the decisions of the magistrature of labour guarantee the harmony of wages with the normal requirements of life, the possibilities of production, and the returns of labour.

13. The statistical data collected by the public administrations the central institute of statistics and professional associations on the conditions of production and labour, the situation of the money market, and the variations in the standard of life of the worker shall dictate the rules to be followed in conciliating the interests of the different categories and classes with the superior interests of production.

*Extracts from Law of April 3, 1926, on Syndicates*

1. Syndical associations of employers and workers, both intellectual and manual, may be legally recognized, if they fulfil the following conditions:

(1) For organizations of masters, if the employers inscribed voluntarily employ at least one-tenth of workers in firms of the same nature in the district in which the association operates;

For associations of workers, if the numbers inscribed voluntarily represent at least one-tenth of the workers in the category for which the association is constituted in the district in which it operates;

(2) In addition to the protection of the economic and moral interests of their members, the associations must effectively pursue the assistance, instruction, and moral and national education of their members;<sup>1</sup>

(3) The officials of the association must give guarantees of capacity, morality, and firm national convictions.

2. Associations of persons exercising a trade or profession may be legally recognized if they fulfil the conditions required by the preceding Article.

4. . . . The statutes shall contain . . . the conditions

<sup>1</sup> Out of an income of 255 millions *lire*, plus 94 millions from public funds, 20 millions are appropriated to charity and education.

of admission of members, and such members shall guarantee good political conduct from the national point of view.

5. Associations recognized by the law . . . legally represent all the employers, workers, artists, and specialists of the category in question in the district in which the association operates, whether they belong to it or not. They have power to levy<sup>1</sup> on those whom they represent, whether they belong to the association or not, an annual contribution not exceeding, in the case of an employer, one day's salary of all his employees, and in the case of a worker, artist, or specialist one day's wages. . . . The contributions of workers shall be deducted from their salaries.

7. . . . The nomination or election of the Presidents and Secretaries of . . . syndicates are valid only after confirmation by Royal Decree on the proposal of the competent Minister after consultation with the Minister of the Interior. This approval may be cancelled at any time.

8. Communal, departmental, or provincial associations are under the supervision of the Prefect and the protectorship of the Provincial Administrative Junta. . . . Regional, inter-regional, and national associations are under the supervision and protectorship of the competent Minister.

10. Collective contracts of labour concluded by associations of employees, workers, artists, and specialists apply to all those who are represented by their syndicates under the terms of Article 5.

13. Any dispute arising in connection with the

<sup>1</sup> Under Royal Decree of July 1, 1926, Art. 26, the amount of the levy must be approved by the Provincial Administrative Junta.

collective relations of labour, whether in reference to the application of contracts or other existing regulations or to a demand for new conditions of labour, come under the jurisdiction of Courts of Appeal acting as tribunals of labour. Before any decision is arrived at the President of the court shall attempt conciliation.

14. In order to enable Courts of Appeal to act as tribunals of labour, there shall be established in connection with each court a special section comprising three magistrates . . . to whom shall be attached, according to circumstances, two citizens experienced in problems of production and labour, chosen by the president.

16. The . . . tribunal of labour in pronouncing sentences touching the interpretation of contracts shall base its decisions on the laws concerning the execution of contracts; and when it is a question of formulating new conditions of labour, the court shall try to reconcile equitably the interests of employers and workers and shall always safeguard the superior interests of production.

18. Lock-outs and strikes are prohibited.

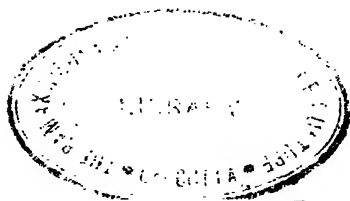
Employers who, without just cause and for the sole end of obtaining modifications in the contracts of labour in force, suspend the work of their establishments, offices, or workshops are punishable by a fine varying between 10,000 and 100,000 *lire* (£108 and £1,080).

Employees or workers who, to the number of three or more, leave their work under a mutual understanding arrived at previously, or execute their work in such a manner as to prejudice its regularity or continuity, with the object of imposing an alteration in their contract of labour, shall be subject to a fine varying between 100 and

1,000 *lire*. The prosecution shall be under the Code of Criminal Procedure.

If the authors of the crimes referred to in the preceding Articles are more numerous, the principal instigators and organizers are punishable by imprisonment for one year at least and two years at most, and by the fine mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

19. Officials and workers in public services or in enterprises of public interest who, to the number of three or more, enter into a mutual understanding [etc., as in Art. 18] are punishable by imprisonment of between one year and six months.



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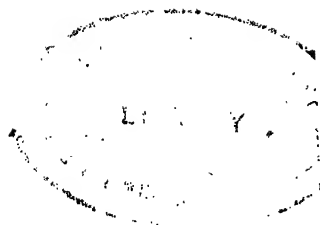
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